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BEDTIME STORIES



AUGUST, 1935

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A Peach Of A Pair

By Tony Fowler

RALPH WILLIAMSON was undoubtedly the handsomest young man on the entire Inwood Pictures lot—and that was saying plenty! Ralph's hair, black and curly in the extreme, capped a finely shaped head and handsome, Grecian profiled face that nicely set off his firm, broad shoulders and trim, strong young athletic figure. The little cutie behind the

information desk was absolutely ga-ga about Ralph. She perked up.

"You're sure a knockout in that uniform, baby!" she often said—and always took special care that, when she leaned across the desk to tell him something, he must become aware of the fresh, fulsome beauty of her young breasts, hardly concealed by her low cut dress.

Ralph, who had nice eyes that missed very little in the way of such attractive details, looked, gaped, then sighed.

"Nice of you to say that, Cecile," he said. "But what good does it do me? Why, you're the only one on the lot that thinks I should be in pictures, instead of holding down a twenty-



"I like 'em young, Ralph, like you!" Pennie said in a low vibrant tone.

five-a-week job as studio guide. As for the rest of 'em, the ones that could get me into pictures if they wanted to—" his boyish brows contracted, and even his frown was attractive—"well, they only see me as Ralph, the studio guide . . . a nice enough fellow, but hardly to be thought of in any other capacity."

Cecile sighed in sympathy. "That's just the trouble with people," she said, her small hand stealing to the neck of her dress and touching her jutting breasts provocatively. "The rose that wastes its fragrance on the desert air—that's you, Ralphie." She looked at him, a speculative gaze. "C'mon over to my apartment tonight," she suggested, looking hard at him. "We can drown our sorrows in a bottle of Haig & Haig the boss slipped me this morning." Then, as he hesitated: "I can think of you in another capacity," she breathed sibilantly—"if you get what I mean!"

Ralph blushed profusely and becomingly. "Maybe," he said diffidently, as he rose and sauntered into the nearby studio lunch room, followed by Cecile's angry and disappointed gaze.

"Snooty guy!" she said scornfully, tilting her pretty nose in a disdain that she did not really feel.

RALPH, SITTING IN the lunch room between a dark faced Arab with flowing black beard and snow-white burnoose, and a half nude and devilishly attractive "Egyptian" dancer, sank his head in his hands and brooded.

But just then, it happened, a pert little waitress paused by his side to take his order, and he glanced up from his meditative resolutions—and found them at once broken to bits, as a hitherto strong dam is burst by overwhelming spring floods!

Seated directly across from him, her slimly beautiful bare arms resting indolently on the checked tablecloth, her hazy violet eyes studying the menu, was a perfect symphony in grey! Her fine spun red-gold hair, delicate and wispy and curled daintly on the top of an adorable little head, was crowned with a pearl grey slouch hat that gave her thin, elfin face a provocative look . . . her dark grey tailored coat swelled beautifully and suggestively where her breasts impertinently pushed out the heavy cloth . . . a pale grey choker of lace set off the color scheme and contrasted perfectly with the rose-pink of her soft cheeks, the coral red of her secretly smiling lips.

Ralph stared; ignoring the waiter, he leaned

down as if to pick something from the floor, and was treated to the heart stimulating spectacle of a smart pleated dark grey skirt, gun metal stockings sheathing legs that were poems of delight, slim girlish ankles and tiny feet encased in grey suede shoes. At that moment, she shifted her legs carelessly, and a flash and ripple of grey lace panties turned his heart to molten lava. Ralph straightened, and, with trembling hand, mopped his brow.

"Why," he thought, while his voice, seeming dim in the distance, was giving his order, "why is it that long grey gloves on a woman's bare arms are the most thrilling things in the world?"

"Don't tell me!" he thought, "that there isn't something passionate in a woman's bare arms and long gloves!"

Which was not such an unusual observation from a guard in a Hollywood studio. Ralph had seen plenty in his time . . . but this slim, beautiful, grey clad redheaded baby was the prize of the lot!

RALPH GLANCED CAUTIOUSLY across at her, and his heart contracted spasmodically as he noted that she was also gazing at him, the corners of her adorable rouged mouth turning up slightly as she actually smiled at him! At the same moment, a fat, middle-aged gentleman sitting at her side nudged her possessively in the side, and pointed to Ralph.

"He's a guide, prob'ly," said the fat man through a mouthful of spinach. "He'll take us around the studio, Pennie."

Ralph's heart deflated again. The man's air had been so proprietary that he knew they were married. "What a break for me!" thought Ralph sourly. "Here I fall for a skirt against my better judgment, and it turns out she's married!" Mingled with these thoughts was the sound of her name. "Pennie," the old cuss had called her. Somehow, the name seemed to suit her perfectly, thrilled him when he mentally uttered it.

But she was speaking to him: "You're a guide, aren't you?" she breathed, in a voice like the sighing of the south wind in a cluster of cherry blossoms. Ralph, bereft of speech, nodded dumbly. Pennie leaned forward across the table, the action sending to his alert nostrils the elusive fragrance of a perfume that was like the cherry blossoms in her name. "Then," she suggested softly, still smiling, "perhaps you can show us over the studio? What's your name?"

"Be glad to take you around," said Ralph, blushing furiously. "And—my name's Ralph."

"Very well, Ralph," said Pennie—and the sound of his name on her soft lips gave it a new sound—"I am Penrose Lackey, and this is my husband." Deftly, she unbuttoned a grey glove and extracted a studio pass for two, which she handed across to him. "Finish your lunch, Ralph," she smiled, "and then we'll see the sights!"

Ten minutes later, Mr. Lackey waddling ahead, his bald head wagging from side to side as he seemed to take in everything with his sharp little eyes, Ralph and Pennie, her lovely legs undulating beneath her stiff, split skirt as she walked, moved across the Inwood lot.

"This is the set for 'Passion Flower of Araby', Mrs. Lackey," explained Ralph dutifully, as they stood on a set built in imitation of a street in a North African town.

She smiled up at him, her elfin mouth quirked

"Pennie dearest, that was the most beautiful experience of my life! I must see more of you!"



amusedly. "My friends call me 'Pennie,'" she said in a low voice . . . and she slipped a slim, grey-clad arm intimately into his strong uniformed one, so that he could help her step across a bad place in the ill made, cobbled street. Ralph, glancing down, gasped as she exuberantly stretched her lithe legs across the declivity, thus allowing her silk sheathed "stems" to flash



pertly through the aperture in her stylish split skirt.

"Ooh," she chided, giving his arm a slight squeeze, "you peeked, Ralph!" But she did not let go of his arm, he noted with rising satisfaction! Ahead, Mr. Lackey paused, and observed the leading man of the picture, seated smoking a cigarette in an Arab burnoose, awaiting the next scene of the picture.

"Huh!" said Mr. Lackey. "He isn't so darned good looking, seems to me! How'd a

guy like that get the lead in this picture? What's he get a week?"

Usually, Ralph hated all these routine questions the tourists asked him. But suddenly, emboldened, perhaps, by Pennie's pressure on his arm, he exploded. "He wouldn't get seven-fifty a day, if the star wasn't crazy about him. As it is, if they don't use him she'll quit—her contract's almost up. He's only a ham, but he gets three thousand a week!"

Pennie pursed her young lips and whistled. "And the heroine?" she asked. "Is she such a raving beauty that they have to do whatever she says?"

RALPH SECRETLY SQUEEZED her arm. "She isn't half as pretty as you," he said bashfully, looking up to see if her husband had heard. But he had already gone ahead. Pennie's eyes dilated with pleasure, as she looked up at him.

"The leading man isn't a tenth as handsome as you, honey!" she whispered.

Ralph's knees shook at her words and her nearness. "I'd like to play opposite you in a picture!" he said, tiny shivers of delight at her presence chasing up and down his spine.

"Only," murmured Pennie insinuatingly, "only in—a picture?"

Ralph pulled himself together. After all, he was only a hired hand who needed to hold his job.

"Here's the Wild West set for 'Cowboy Lover,'" he said gruffly.

"Huh!" grunted Mr. Lackey. "Hero of this picture looks more like a horse than his horse does! How much's he get?"

Ralph, conscious of the pressure of Pennie's warm, vibrant breast against the hardening muscles of his arm, replied briefly: "Oh, he gets twenty-five hundred per."

Mr. Lackey, snorting, moved on. "Huh! You're better looking than he is! Bet you can ride a horse better, too!"

Pennie's body moved against Ralph's as they followed the broad back of her husband. "I bet you can ride like nobody's business!" she whispered in his ear. "Maybe I'll take you riding one of these days!"

"Oh," said Ralph, as they entered the stage where 'Flames of Desire' was being finished. "Have you some horses?"

Pennie smiled impishly at him. "Sil-ly!" she said, laughing prettily in his face. Ralph flushed, but did not trust his voice. In silence, the three of them watched the final rehearsal and filming

of the scene. It was an extremely warm scene, and Ralph's eyes dilated with envy as he watched Jack La Foulard, the hero, slide his hand expertly up the pantied leg of lovely Lila Luis. "I don't think," said Pennie, frowning prettily up at him, "that her panties are half as pretty as mine, do you, Ralph?"

"How do I know?" whispered Ralph, glancing nervously at Mr. Lackey, who, however, was immensely interested in the bedroom scene.

Pennie arched her eyebrows mischievously. "Maybe," she half promised, "maybe, if you're a good little boy, Pennie will let you find out—later!"

Ralph, feeling his good resolutions melting rapidly, said hoarsely: "Scene's over. Let's get out of here. We can look in on a musical they're putting on over on Stage 10, if you like."

Mr. Lackey, brightening, said: "A musical, huh? Let's go!"

Pennie, her arm still linked in Ralph's, said in a low, vibrant tone: "Jack La Foulard's awfully good looking, isn't he? But still, he's much too old." She looked up into his eyes with an affectionate gleam in her lovely ones: "I like 'em young, Ralph—like you!"

RALPH, A GENTLEMAN at heart, forebore to say: "Oh, yeah? Then why did you pick old Lackey for a hubby?" He didn't need to spoil things that way, he reflected. Of course, she'd married him for his money . . . but maybe she was beginning to regret the bargain!

Now they were on the set of 'Everything Goes!' Giant Kliegs burned brightly . . . stage hands moved rapidly about . . . cameras were wheeled into place . . . the director, from his canvas-backed camp chair, motioned for silence!

An orchestra, concealed behind a clump of potted palms, burst into a rollicking jazz tune, as fourteen gorgeous girls, scantily attired in silken brassieres and diaphanous panties, danced nimbly out upon the floor, breasts shaking amorously, throats gleaming beautifully in the bright lights, legs flashing rhythmically in time to the music. Pennie and Ralph were standing in a semi-dark secluded portion of the stage, and Ralph suddenly grew tense as she took his hand in her tiny one and guided it unerringly upward on her quivering body, until his palm rested on the lovely, soft swelling contours of a glorious grey-silk clad breast!

Ralph, glancing hurriedly at Mr. Lackey, observed that that portly gentleman was standing as in a trance, eyes riveted compellingly on the flashing white breasts, legs, and figures of the

lovely chorus girls. Almost automatically, as though forced to the delightful task by a compulsion stronger than his resolutions, Ralph's suddenly expert fingers touched the warm sweetness of Pennie's palpitating breast. It was suddenly hot and close in the stage, and the air seemed filled with the heady sweetness of

you at the main gate at five. Good-bye."

Pennie nudged Ralph violently. Responding as though by radio control—(and it was, after all, something like that!) Ralph nodded. "All right, Mr. Lackey," he said. Together they left the stage, and many heads turned at sight of such a handsome pair.



Pennie's perfumed body, which gave off an overpowering promise of something magnificently alluring and beautiful in store for them both!

The shot was soon over, and Ralph and Pennie walked over to where Mr. Lackey was standing as though in a trance. He glanced hurriedly at them. "Listen, Ralph," he said swiftly, his eyes very much occupied with a sinuous bodied blonde chorus girl who was giving him an imperious "Come hither!" look. "Listen, you two go around the lot without me, will you? I've got some—er, something to do on this lot. I'll join

"I think," ventured Pennie, as they walked slowly down the studio street, "that you're the best looking man on the whole Inwood lot!"

"Maybe," said Ralph dubiously. "But what does it get me?"

They had reached a deserted stage. Pennie, her skirt held high above the creamy flesh which bulged provocatively atop her grey rosebudded garters, stepped quickly up and stood framed in the doorway gazing fondly down at him. "Why don't you come in here with me," was her cool invitation, "and find out!"

There was a dark corner in the stage, a litter of pillows, and—well, Ralph found out!

IT WAS PERHAPS an hour later when his hands tenderly patted Pennie's disheveled dress back into place. Looking down lovingly into her flushed but adoring face, he smoothed her fine red hair back from her brow, and whispered tensely:

"Pennie, dearest! That was the most beautiful experience of my life, and you're a perfect darling! But—I must see more of you! More and more and more! I can never get enough of you!"

Pennie shifted her perfumed body until it rested once more against his. Glanced at the tiny jeweled white gold wrist watch on her slender wrist. "My gosh!" she exclaimed. "Six o'clock! I've got to get right back home. Give me your phone number, Ralph, my sweet—and don't you dare take a step outside your place tonight until I call you!" . . . and with a breath taking flash of grey silk legs and lacy grey panties, she was gone!

Ralph, the fourth in a series of tall cool drinks at his elbow, alive with growing passion that only fond remembrance can conjure up, sat by the phone in his small bungalow court apartment. If she didn't call in another minute . . . !

Brrr-r-r-ing!

Ralph seized the phone, and sighed with relief as Pennie's soft, throaty voice floated enticingly over the wire.

"He isn't back yet!" she said happily. "Just called up and said he had to go over to Pasadena for the Cherry Festival, and wouldn't be back until noon tomorrow! Hurry over! 8949 Miramar Place, Apartment 447-A."

Ralph swiftly copied down the number, slipped on his topcoat, and slammed out the door and into his modest roadster. Five minutes later he was knocking on Pennie's door, his thoughts riotous with pictures of himself and Pennie in each other's arms through an eon of ecstatic sweetness!

The door opened slowly, and a bare feminine arm reached out and pulled him in. There stood Pennie, in a sheer grey silk negligee fringed with tiny pink rosebuds, the garment clinging to her ravishing slim figure, slightly damp in spots. Mingled with the enticing odor of her natural

girlishness was the fresh smell of hot water and bath salts.

"Just took a hot bath, honey," said Pennie, as her lips went up and clung wetly to his, "and if you're very nice, maybe Pennie will let you powder her back . . ."

Into the bathroom she tripped, her negligee flat against her rounded curves, Ralph following ardently. Tingling in every heated nerve, he took the powder puff from her dainty hand.

Pennie, blushing from head to foot, turned to him, proudly lowered her negligee for the gentle pats of the powder puff, then the hot rain of his avid caresses.

AND JUST THAT MOMENT a key clicked in the latch, the door swung quickly open, and Mr. Lackey entered!

"Well, well," said that gentleman benevolently. "Charming little domestic scene!"

Ralph was speechless, Pennie, strangely enough, smiling.

"Ralph," said Mr. Lackey briskly, "Pennie told me this afternoon that she wanted you. Said she liked 'em young and handsome. And anything that Pennie wants she gets. That's why we arranged this little affair." He rubbed fat palms together, and beamed at them.

"You probably don't know," he continued affably, "that I'm a banker from New York, and I'm taking over Inwood Productions. Pennie wants to be a movie star, and so do you. As for me—I like variety, and being married cramps my style; I found that out this evening when I took all those cute chorines out for a moonlight swim at Santa Monica. So—"

"So," finished Pennie, tightening her bare arm possessively about Ralph, "Mr. Lackey is going to make us both stars, because he thinks we're the best looking couple in Hollywood. He's starting by casting us opposite each other, at a thousand a month each!"

Ralph gasped.

"Do you think, Ralph," asked Mr. Lackey slyly, "that you could get along on two thousand per for the two of you? Are you willing to help Inwood Pictures economize to that extent?"

Ralph, for answer, crushed Pennie's soft, warm body against his own. "Okay by me, Mr. Lackey," he said happily, "that is, as long as we're not expected to economize on—Love!"

HIS WILD FLING

JIMMIE "WOODY" MASON lay stretched out on the couch in a lazy manner with his face buried in a newspaper. The soft glow of the floor lamp, the only light in the cosy living room, flooded over him but left the far corners in deep shadow. At the light step of

Woody yawned, ran his aristocratic fingers through his dark curly hair and smiled engagingly as his brown eyes wandered over June's adorable form that was clad only in the wifely intimacy of a silk chemise. He sat up, pulled her down on his lap.

By
Vergie
Woods



"I'm going to stay home with you tonight." Again his lips sought hers.

June coming out of the small kitchenette he looked up and tossed the paper aside.

"Darling, are you going out tonight?" she asked, stooping over and kissing him on the cheek.

"Yes, dear," he told her, as he let his right hand wander over the entrancing curves of her thigh while his left cupped the thrusting cone of one firm breast. "Dick and I have a few rounds of pool on for tonight."

She wriggled closer. The action caused her other breast to quiver gently and threaten to burst through the thin silk into view.

Though they had been married two years Woody still enjoyed loving her. Even now, her warm contact was making his blood pound hotly. He laid her back on the couch and kissed the inviting little hollow of her throat. A moment later his lips were over her quivering, desirable mouth as his hand slipped past one dimpled knee to her stocking top. His fingers touched warm flesh! She trembled and clung tighter for a moment, then smiled and gently pushed him away as she tried to hide the smoldering fires burning in her dark eyes.

"Woody, you mustn't. You have a date with Dick," she reminded him as the desire rushed over her to pull out the light and forget everything except the thrilling sensations his fingers were creating in her!

"Let'm wait," he said, putting his arms around her slender waist again. "I'm going to stay home with you tonight." Again his lips were over her throbbing mouth, arousing her inner emotions into a consuming flame that cried out to be satisfied. She relaxed in his embrace, returned the warm ardor of his lips, then suddenly wriggled free and stood up.

"Darling, you must behave," she breathed, cupping her breasts with slender fingers to stop their enticing quiver that was driving her husband almost frantic. "Now get your hat and coat. You only have ten minutes in which to meet Dick."

Woody gazed up at her for a moment, then begged:

"June, please don't leave me like this!" The pout of his lips and ruddy hair gave him the appearance of a much abused little boy. "Gosh, dear, sometimes you're cruel with your teasing."

"I know, Woody," she replied. "But there isn't time! When you come home tonight, then . . . Now go comb your hair while I get your coat and hat."

He watched her disappear into the other room, then reluctantly got to his feet with a grunt of disgust.

A few moments later June helped him on with his coat, kissed him good-bye, and locked the door after his departing figure. Now that he was gone, June wished she had let him remain with her this evening. She was quite sure she could have made it worth his while. But then, Woody had only one night off each week and she couldn't disappoint him.

June decided to take a bath, then retire and

read an interesting novel. Perhaps by the time she had finished Woody would be home to make life more thrilling for her aroused emotions. She slipped off the silk chemise and tossed it on the bed. A second later her abbreviated panties followed. June stood there in the soft lamp glow . . . entirely . . . nude! Now, if Woody should only return! The thought caused the pink tips of her firm breasts to thrust outward. Then, while caressing her satiny smooth skin, she gazed at the lovely reflection of her body in the mirror. She loved her white body. She knew it was almost a semblance of perfection. Hadn't Woody told her so many times during countless, torrid love scenes!

FOR A MOMENT JIMMY HAD the desire to retrace his steps and forget everything and everybody; but then he had promised Dick. And not until he walked into the club did he forget June.

"He isn't here, Woody," the bartender told him when asked if Dick had been in. "But he called and said to tell you that he couldn't make it. Said he'd explain to you later."

"O. K., Bill. Thanks." He turned away, then back again. "Well, guess I'll have a glass of beer anyhow."

While leaning against the bar he tried to think of something in the way of entertainment for the balance of the evening. Should he return to June? No, she would be all right and maybe he could enjoy himself elsewhere. Why not go to some night club and watch the floor show? It seemed ages since he had been to one. In fact it had been. Excellent idea, he finally decided, setting his empty glass on the bar.

A moment later he left the club, walked down Fourth Avenue and into the Cuban Gardens. The place was filled almost to capacity; but he finally found a table where he could watch the crowd dance and see each performance of the floor show that was scheduled for every half hour.

"Ladies and gentlemen, for our next number we have the pleasure of introducing Miss Ann Dare, singing that familiar old tune: 'Sleepy Time Down South'."

Woody stared with surprise at the loveliness of the dark brunette, who glided into the spotlight and swayed with easy grace to the low rhythm of the music. He felt a thrill race up his spine as the low tone of her rich voice began floating from the white column of her throat. Dark eyes, fringed with black intriguing lashes, sparkled above a cute turned up nose and adorable cupid bow lips. His searching eyes

traveled downward to the twin hillocks of her exquisite breasts thrusting against the clinging gown of red satin. It fit her lovely figure tightly, leaving each curve of her delicate hips and thighs boldly defined.

As the spotlighted figure slowly swayed across the floor in perfect rhythm with the music

THERE WAS NO FURTHER TIME for thought, for the spotlight flashed off and the girl was walking toward his table. Woody smiled, bowed, and offered a chair.

"Your singing was very lovely, Miss Dare," he told her as an opening prelude.

"Thank you so much, Mr.—"



"You're a stranger here?" he asked.

"Yes, I've only been in town a week," she replied.

Woody suddenly realized she was drawing nearer to his table. All treasured thoughts of June were forgotten. For the first time in two years he felt frightened at the bold flash of a girl's eyes in his direction. But the lovely form of the girl with fathomless dark eyes held him spell-bound. Then, during one of her swaying motions, she leaned slightly forward, looked right at him and winked!

Woody trembled and unconsciously whispered:

"How about a date?"

Most surprisingly to him, she nodded and moved on. But then he suddenly remembered June. Gosh, he had forgotten her. And now he had made a date with this lovely singer. What if June should find out? He shivered at the thought. He certainly had gotten himself into a nice predicament.

"Jimmie Mason," he gladly finished for her. "Will you have something to drink with me?"

"No, thanks. I just had two cocktails, and I think that's enough to last me for awhile at least," she smiled across at him.

Leaning forward and placing his elbows on the table, Woody caught a glimpse of white breasts swinging free below the neckline of her low cut dress. The knowledge that they needed

no brassiere to help hold them up caused his pulse to race madly.

"You're a stranger here?" he asked.

"Yes, I've only been in town a week," she replied.

"And you're from the South?"

"Yes. How did you know?" She looked up with quick interest.

"The deep tone of your singing a few moments ago told me that much. Your voice seemed to breathe of the warm South."

"Well, I am from Alabama. I came—" The loud blare of the orchestra breaking into a snappy dance tune interrupted her.

Woody decided he would enjoy holding her soft form in his arms, so he asked, "Would you care to dance? It has been some time since I've tried, but if—"

"Oh, I'd love to, Jimmie," she responded quickly, then got up from the table, stepped over to the edge of the polished floor and waited for him.

Woody took her slender form in his arms. She cuddled close and pressed her warm cheek against his as they began dancing. His right hand, placed on the merging curves of her waist and hip, told him there wasn't much beneath the red gown. And he vowed to himself that before the evening was far advanced he would play the role of an amateur detective and go in search of new worlds to conquer!

After they had danced part way around the floor he looked down and asked, "Do you have to remain for any other number on the program?"

"No. Do you want to go somewhere else, Jimmie?"

"If you do." He pressed her tighter. She smiled with quick response and slipped her arm a little closer about his neck.

"Then let's leave now, for I—" Woody had kissed the pink tip of her ear peeping through the dark tresses as they had danced through a shadowed corner. "Aw, you shouldn't have done that, do you think?"

"I'm sorry, Miss Dare." Then he quivered at her delighted giggle.

"I've got to think of some way to punish you," she whispered up, "so let's be going."

With a loud clatter the orchestra ended the jazz number, and Woody followed Ann off the floor and through the maze of tables to the check room.

Then, as they stepped through the swinging doors into the cool night air, a taxi rolled to the curb before them.

Woody nodded toward the car, and asked, "Shall we take that on our tour?" He smiled down amusingly.

"It depends on where you wish to go. I don't know of many places where we could enjoy ourselves, so it's up to you to lead the way."

"Would you rather go some place where there's a crowd or where we can be alone?" He silently hoped it was the latter.

"I'll make an agreement with you, Jimmie." Her dark eyes flashed up as she slipped her slender hand in the curve of his arm. "Let's go to my apartment and have a cocktail, then go some place that you know of from there."

As the cab glided away from the flickering entrance lights of the Cuban Gardens Ann snuggled into Woody's arms in the shadowed rear seat. He looked down at the faint shadow of her face, then dropped a burning kiss on the up-turned lips. As her arms crept about his neck and her warm breath mingled with his, he felt her luscious breasts quivering against his chest from the motion of the cab over the cobblestones.

A SHORT TIME LATER they left the cab and an elevator flashed them to the eighth floor to Ann's cosy apartment.

"You mix the drinks, Jimmie. You'll find everything in there," she said, pointing toward an open door. "I'm going to change into something different. I'll only be a moment."

Woody watched the enticing quiver of her hips as she walked into the bedroom and disappeared. After a moment he went into the small kitchenette, opened the ice box and found whiskies of all descriptions. While mixing two cocktails subconsciously, his mind dwelt on the piece of feminine loveliness moving about in the other room. By the sound of her movements, for she had not closed the bedroom door, he was almost sure she was slipping out of the gown. What was beneath it? He left the cocktails, was half-way across the living room before he caught himself! Gosh, he had almost started on that trip of exploration! As he returned and picked up the two glasses with shaking fingers he tried to still the wild thump thump of his heart.

As he came out of the kitchenette with a glass in each hand, Ann appeared in the bedroom doorway. He stared with startled amazement. She had changed into a thin wrap of soft silk fringed with dainty lace. The light at her back silhouetted her lovely figure through the sheer texture held together in front with only a sash, leaving the tantalizing curves of her undulating



"Why didn't you tell me you were married?" Woody asked.

hips more pronounced before his searching gaze.

To Ann, it seemed his eyes were raging volcanoes . . . so hot did she become! With a queer feeling of ecstasy coursing through her body she walked to the couch and sat down, then looked up at him still standing holding the cocktails and smiled sweetly.

His dark eyes caressed her lovely form as he handed her one of the glasses. As she tipped the glass to her lips he declared with a passionate throb in his voice:

"Ann, you're so lovely I could take you in my arms and . . ."

"Jimmie darling, your drink," she reminded him as her long lashes drooped over her languid eyes, concealing the raging flames in their fathomless depths.

"Oh, yes," he mumbled, sitting down beside her as he tore his gaze from the twin mounds of her protruding breasts. He took one drink and set the glass on the cigarette stand at the end of the couch, then turned back to her and

asked, "How long do you plan on staying in town?"

"Perhaps two weeks more, Jimmie. I don't know for sure."

"Then you're going back to Alabama?" He shook his head as the vision of June came into his mind. Why did the memory of her have to return at a time like this to disturb him? Then her vision disappeared as he looked at the alluring siren beside him.

"Yes." She handed him her empty glass and he set it beside his own. "But does that make any difference to us, now?" As she settled back into her former position her wrap parted and left one tapered leg exposed halfway up her thigh of creamy whiteness! Her dark orbs were like two dark pools in the white oval of her face.

"I guess it doesn't, darling." Woody's voice was husky with pent up emotions racing through his body seeking an outlet. "We live only for today. Let tomorrow take care of itself."

"Then let's live . . ."

Woody had taken her in his strong arms! She thrilled to the virile strength of him and said no more. She couldn't if she had wanted to. His lips were crushed against the warm dampness of her mouth, smothering her. The next instant his right hand wandered from the melting curves of her hips to one pink tipped breast in search of new worlds to explore!

THEN, IN THE HALLWAY, the doorbell buzzed two shorts and one long!

Ann's lips were clinging to Woody's as her dreamy eyes flew open and she stared up at him with surprise and sudden fear.

"My husband! What shall we do?" she gasped.

"How do you know?" Woody was on his feet now, staring about the room for some place to hide.

"He always rings the bell like that," Ann told him as it rang again. "Hide in the bath room! I'll try and get him in the bedroom so you can slip out the front door." She picked up his overcoat and handed it to him. "Hurry!" Again the bell buzzed. To Woody, it sounded as though a dozen fire engines were rushing down the street.

"Why didn't you tell me you were married?" Woody asked.

"I haven't time to tell you now, darling," said Ann as she gave him a fleeting kiss and backed away, then straightened her wrap and disappeared into the hall.

Woody slipped hurriedly into the bath room and softly closed the door, leaving only a wee crack so he could peek out. His heart was hammering like a pile driver. Was there no escape? He hoped Ann could get her husband into the bedroom for ten seconds. Then he would be across that room and down the stairs in nothing flat.

Then he noticed his hat lying on the table! Of all things to forget at a time like this, was his wild thought as his gaze flashed the other way at the sound of heavy footsteps and he saw a huge broad shouldered man walk into his line of vision with his arm about Ann's slender waist. Woody swallowed a lump in his throat as he visioned his countenance if this husband discovered him hiding in the bath room!

"I didn't expect you back for two days, dear. What happened?" Woody heard Ann say to her husband.

"The deal was canceled. But, darling, I don't mind for it's so nice to come home and find you waiting for me."

Even though he was in great danger Woody could hardly suppress the tickling sensation rising in his throat. The best he could do was to satisfy himself with a silent, broad grin.

"Come into the bedroom and remove your things, dear." Ann was clinging to his arm and pulling him toward the open doorway. "I want to whisper something sweet to you." At that remark Woody felt a great load lifted off his shoulders, then, in turn, felt a chill race up his spine and prickle his scalp. Ann's husband had abruptly turned back to lay his hat and briefcase on the table!

WOODY WAS POSITIVE HIS heart stopped beating as he tried to keep his violently shaking knees from cracking together. He steadied his gaze and peeked through the crack at the drama that was being enacted in the living room. The worst had come. Ann's husband had picked up his hat! The next second he whirled around to his lovely wife and exclaimed:

"What's the meaning of this!" He shoved the hat toward her. "Whom does this belong to?"

Woody was surprised at her ready reply. "The manager from one of the night clubs was here trying to persuade me to sing for them at night. When he left he forgot his hat." She undulated her hips, snuggled close against him and slipped her arms around his neck. For a moment Woody thought everything was going to be in his favor as he saw the husband put his arms about his

wife. Then, to his surprise, he abruptly shoved her clinging form from him.

"You're hiding a man in here!" he flung at her.

"No, darling. I'm not." Fear shone in her gorgeous eyes.

"Again you've tried to put your love making stunt over on me. It doesn't work this time!" His hand flashed to his hip pocket. It came out clasp ing a wicked looking automatic . . . !

Woody's heart sank into the vacant void of his stomach. Was this to be the end, and when he was so young? He had never thought of dying before. Then he thought of the window. As he whirled around and stared out, he found that the roof of an adjoining building was on the same level as that of the apartment he was now in. He grabbed the latch and shoved upward, praying the window wouldn't squeak. Another inch, just enough to allow his body to slip through. It was almost to the top. Then, before he could stop pushing, it moaned loudly!

"You have him hidden in the bath room!" Woody heard Ann's husband roar.

Now that he was discovered, Woody didn't wait for any further developments. He threw his overcoat out, jumped into the opening, then slid through and tumbled to the roof below. As he grabbed his coat and leaped to his feet he heard the bath room door slam against the wall. In another second Ann's husband would be at the window with his automatic! Now if he could

only make the furnace chimney a few yards across the roof he could find protection behind it.

As he dashed away his leaping figure seemed to be almost flying through the moonlit night. A few feet more and he would be safe. He stumbled and fell! Simultaneously, the automatic cracked, its livid flashes streaks of orange in the night! Whizzing bullets hummed over his prostrate form, ricocheted off the chimney and screamed away in the darkness.

In the few seconds that those bullets had whined over him and Ann's husband had run out of ammunition, Woody imagined it had taken hours. Now was his chance to escape. He jumped up, dashed around the chimney and on toward the black skeleton work of the fire escape looming in the moonlight. And not until he started down the iron rungs and finally reached the street below did he feel anything but safe.

It was quite late when Woody, just recovering from his wild night's experience, finally reached home, unlocked the apartment door and walked in to find June asleep. As he gazed down at her lovely form, saw the quilted coverlets pushed down to her waist and the long lashes brushing the pink of her cheeks, he vowed to himself that never again would he fare forth in the role of an amateur detective in search of adventure. Enough thrills had been woven into one night to last him the balance of his life.

Clothes cut quite a figure today;

It is the truth, we've found.

A dress may make one girl look slim

And a hundred men look 'round!

BETRAYAL

*With gallant bow, he led her out
Upon a floor that gleamed like gold.
What difference if she was quite stout?
He pressed her hand in manner bold.*

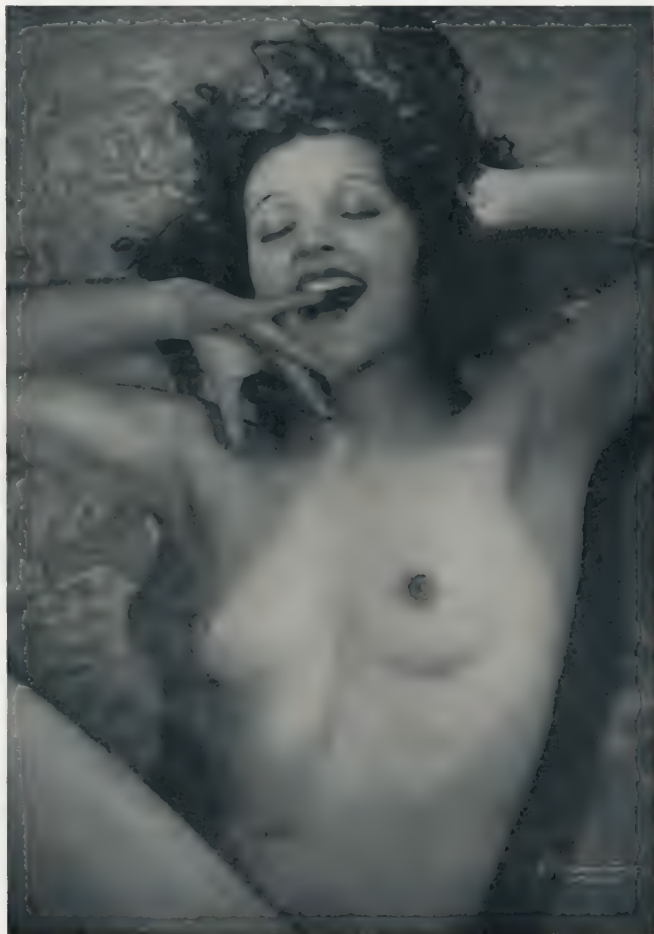
*She blushed—her eyes were downward cast.
And then, his arm was 'round her waist,
He held her close—her heart beat fast.
I fear her thoughts were not quite chaste.*

*The music's sensuous, throbbing beat
Instilled a savage, mad desire—
She longed for days and nights replete
With Love—and Passion's searing fire.*



*By
Inez
Dupre*

*The music ceased, and soul stripped bare,
She stood alone and watched him go—
For she was forty—fat—and fair,
And he, was just a GIGOLO!*



GUARDIAN ANGEL

By Andrew Soames

IT WAS long after midnight but the heavy, impenetrable heat made it impossible for Roy Weston to sleep. He slipped out of bed, donned a light bathrobe, and came downstairs. Possibly the porch would be blessed with a breath of fresh air. As he stepped out on the spacious stone veranda, the silver beam of a full moon picked out the shadowed silhouettes of a couple closely intertwined on the hammock.

For a long, breathless moment Roy was a silent witness to the pantomime of passion. He heard the gasping intake of breath, the quick, excited exhalations. He saw a man's brown hand familiarly cupped about the pink-centered white breast of a woman. Then Roy made his presence known.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

The couple on the hammock broke apart. The girl quickly readjusted her bodice. Her cheeks drained of color. Her male companion was equally nervous. Roy reached down and jerked the youth to his feet.

"For the last time, Mattison, I'm warning you to stay away from Georgia!" he growled. "The next time I catch you within a hundred yards of this house I'll beat you to a pulp! Now, get out!"

Jerry Mattison sailed down the porch steps, a thoroughly ungraceful and ungallant lover. Roy plucked his hat from the railing and tossed it after him. Jerry picked it up from the ground and vanished into the hot night.

Roy turned to the girl on the hammock. "Evidently my warnings mean nothing to you, Georgia," he said. "Is that correct?"

There was no answer. Georgia Dean sat as though in a trance. The only motion of her body was the spasmodic rise and fall of her plump, fully developed breasts. With each upward heave they stretched the cotton bodice of her dress until even the rigid tips were visible through the material.

"Come inside, Georgia," Roy ordered. "I want to talk to you."

In the stifling confines of the living room, Roy faced his eighteen-year-old ward. It was difficult for him to begin. In fact, it had been difficult ever since the last will and testament of

Roger Dean had made the specific request that he assume the guardianship of Roger's seventeen-year-old daughter. That was a year ago, but it had been a year fraught with trial and tribulation. In the first place, people raised their eyebrows and winked meaningfully when Roy applied for the guardianship papers. At the Club, he had overheard a conversation that made the blood boil in his veins.

"Why shouldn't he want to be her guardian?" someone asked. "Hell, she's a damned good looking girl and Roy can't be more than forty. I'd do it myself if I was a bachelor."

That was one difficulty. There were others, too, one of which was the incident he had just interrupted. He looked at Georgia with as much censure as he could cram into his facial expression. She averted her hazel eyes and seemed intent on studying the polished perfection of her finger-tips. Her breasts were agitated hills of firm jelly under her dress. She crossed her legs nervously, baring inches of thigh above the rolled top of a stocking.

"Have you anything on beneath that dress?" Roy queried abruptly.

Georgia started, looked up. "N-N-No!" she stammered. "It's—it's too hot!"

"That's an extremely timely excuse, but I'm quite sure the heat doesn't stand in the way of nice young ladies wearing—er—panties!"

Georgia uncrossed her legs and pulled the hem of her dress down over her knees. Her eyes began to tear.

"You and I will have to come to some sort of understanding, Georgia," Roy said softly. "When I undertook this position it was only because of my deep friendship for your father, and out of respect for his memory I mean to carry the trust out to the best of my ability. This is the second time I have chanced upon you while you were in the midst of indecent behavior with that Mattison boy."

Georgia's head jerked up. Her shoulders squared and her pointed breasts swelled proudly. "It wasn't indecent!" she retorted heatedly. "I love Jerry and he loves me! We're going to get married!" Internal animation played havoc with the quiver of her breasts. "That's



the trouble with you! You think everything's indecent. You're a prude!"

ROY INHALED DEEPLY. He thought of the remark he had overheard at the Club, the countless other innuendoes spread around town. Ordinarily they might not have bothered him, but a faint suspicion that some of them were true was creeping over him. If they weren't,

why did the sight of her young breasts intoxicate him like heady wine? Why, when her dress had rucked up over her stocking top had the palms of his hands become damp? Why, when she licked her carmine lips with the tip of a pink tongue, did his mouth become dry?

"I'm surprised to hear you say that, Georgia," he replied as quietly as his emotional instability would permit. "Deep down in your heart you



know I don't." He tried to put appeal into his voice. "It's just that I feel a terrific responsibility and I don't want anything on my conscience. When you reach legal age you can do as you see fit. Until then, I am your guardian and you'll have to abide by my wishes in the matter."

Georgia's cheeks pinked. "And I suppose I'm to sit around and twiddle my thumbs until I'm twenty-one? Is that it? Well, I won't! I have just as much right to live and love as you have! I've heard stories about you that wouldn't bear repeating! What about Mona Carroll, and what about George Kimberly's wife? I know more than you think I do!"

Roy gulped. It was the first time Georgia had attempted to strike back. Usually she took his admonitions like a guilty child. He could see nothing was to be accomplished tonight.

"I suggest that you retire," he said curtly.

Georgia rose, a triumphant smile playing about her ripe lips. "You can't answer that one, can you?" The next moment she was running up the steps, slim calves twinkling.

For an hour Roy sat on the porch hammock wooing the wisps of a breeze coming in from the hills. He could see danger ahead; danger for himself and danger for Georgia. Somehow, he could not erase from his mind the vision of Jerry Mattison's brown hand fondling his ward's plump breast. It was bitter gall, and much as he tried to tell himself his annoyance was purely protective, the feeling that it might be personal envy always cropped up.

Wiping his hot forehead, he left the porch and tip-toed upstairs. At Georgia's door he listened for sounds of her breathing. Hearing none, he opened the door softly. Georgia was stretched out in bed without any covers on her chiffon clad body. An inquisitive ray of moonlight danced across her rising and falling breasts, imparting brilliance to the milky whiteness of them. Roy held his breath in sight of so much loveliness. He was almost prompted to cast reason and logic to the winds; to step across the room and touch the white solidity of her youth. But something held him back. An inexplicable something. He closed the door quietly and went to his room.

MONA CARROLL'S EYES were violet, her lips were a scarlet flame in the alabaster smoothness of her face, and her figure exuded sensuous maturity as though it were a pungent perfume eddying from the high, voluptuous roundness of her breasts. There was something

mysteriously exotic and Eastern about her, heightened by the ebony lustre of her hair and the long, curled beauty of her lashes. She conquered at will, mostly by the insidious power of imagination—the heated imagination of her victims.

Roy Weston held her in his arms for a brief, pulsating moment. Employing the boneless ductility of a Nautch dancer, Mona eased her undulating curves against him, swelling her unbrassiered breasts until they were taut projectiles pressing into his chest. Her lips parted to receive the fervid pressure of his kiss. Moments later, Roy drew away. His face was clouded.

"I think we'll have to call it quits, Mona," he said.

Her eyes narrowed wonderingly, but her poise in the face of his announcement was remarkable. One hand smoothed a silk bodice over her breasts, heightening the allure of the tight skinned mounds.

"Fed up?" she queried, dampening her lips with the curled tip of a pink tongue.

"No, it's not that, Mona. You know it isn't."

Her hand slid down to a jutting hip. "Funny," she murmured, "but I was expecting this. After all, that Dean girl is quite lovely, isn't she?"

Roy's cheeks pinked. "I hardly expected that from you Mona! However, since you've brought it up, I might as well make everything clear. Georgia Dean is my ward and I feel a definite responsibility for her well being. She's heard a lot of nasty, vile rumors—most of them true—concerning us. Because of it, she feels she has a perfect right to follow in my footsteps. Last night I caught her on the porch with Jerry Mattison. When I called her down, she threw your name at me. Now do you understand?"

Mona's lips curled in a faint smile. "Perfectly, Roy, darling. Honor of the family and all that sort of thing. However, there is one way out. Why don't you marry me and make it legal? The girl could use the sobering influence of a mother, couldn't she?"

"I'm afraid you wouldn't make a very acceptable mother, Mona. As it is, Georgia is beginning to feel that love is something to be taken on the wing."

With the undulating magnetism of a courtesan, Mona came close and slipped her bare arms above Roy's neck. The feel of her breasts and the warm curves of her thighs sent a hot rush of blood to his head.

"And isn't it?" she whispered, her voice low and husky. "Haven't you found that out?"

His arms tightened about her slender waist. "It may be for us, Mona, but until Georgia is of legal age I'm responsible for her welfare. I'd have it on my conscience for the rest of my life if anything happened."

"What if it does, despite your maternal and paternal care?"

"I don't know."

Mona moved away and crossed to a table. She removed a cigarette from a container, lit it. Her shapely shoulders shrugged. "All right, if that's the way you want it."

Roy followed her. "It isn't that I'm not crazy about you, Mona, but you understand my position. Once my responsibility to Roger Dean is fulfilled, then we can marry. Right now I have a job to perform—a tough one. You understand, don't you?"

She blew a perfect circle of blue smoke ceilingward. "More than you can appreciate."

Minutes after Roy Weston left her apartment, Mona reached for the phone. Her violet eyes mirrored the machinations of her mind as she called a familiar number. When, after an interminable wait, Georgia's voice sounded at the other end of the wire, Mona was suave as new honey.

"Miss Dean? This is Mona Carroll. I wonder could you drop down and see me tomorrow afternoon? Just a few little things I'd like to discuss with you. The address is 44 Beverly Drive. Two-thirty will be fine. Good-bye."

Mona returned the receiver to its cradle. She stretched languidly running her hands over her svelte, flexed curves with innate satisfaction. There was more than one way to kill a cat!

DESPITE THE FACT that Georgia's youthful beauty brought a faint envy to Mona, she proceeded to put the younger girl at her ease from the moment Georgia stepped into the apartment. Finally, when the ice had been broken, she took Georgia's hand in hers and patted it with almost maternal solicitude.

"Roy has been talking to me about you, darling," she said, "and I've come to the conclusion that he's all wrong. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be getting as much out of life as the next one."

Georgia gasped. "You—you really mean that?"

Mona smiled. "Of course I do. I don't blame the boys for rushing you. You're a sweet little sugar plum and you deserve to have those gor-



geous lips kissed and that stunning figure caressed. Good heavens, that's ninety percent of living!"

Impetuously, Georgia embraced Mona. "I—I think you're perfectly grand!" she panted.

Mona held her close, conscious of the rigid

projection of breasts, a rigidity which time had taken from her own lovely bosom.

"And I'm going to help you achieve that pleasure, darling, but you must never breathe a word about it to Roy. Are you really in love with Jerry Mattison?"

Georgia shook her head. "No. I told Roy I was just to make it sound better."

"But you like him, don't you?"

"Oh, well enough. As much as any boy in town. He knows how to pet."

"You'd like to be able to meet him some place where you wouldn't be disturbed, wouldn't you?"

Georgia's eyes flashed. "Yes, if only to show Roy that I'm not a baby any longer!"

"Good! That's the spirit I like to see. Here's what I propose to do. I'm going to let you use my apartment as often as you wish. I'll arrange to be out with Roy on the evenings you choose so there won't be any danger of discovery. I'll give you two keys, one for Jerry and one for yourself. Don't come up together because someone might see you. Just let me know what night you're coming and I'll take care of the rest. Keep the lights out and don't answer the phone." She patted Georgia's cheek. "And above all, forget everything Roy ever told you and just have a good time. You're only young once and love is perfect when you are young."

"Mona, you're a honey!" Georgia's gasping compliment was glowingly sincere. "I won't forget this!"

IT WAS TWO DAYS LATER. Georgia waited until Roy left the house before putting through the all-important call. Over the phone she gasped out the details of the arrangement to Mona.

"Tonight, about nine. I gave Jerry one of the keys. He's all excited."

Mona laughed gently. "All right, darling. The apartment will be all yours from nine to eleven. If Roy asks where you're going, invent a bridge or something." Her voice dropped. "And have a good time!"

ON THE STROKE of nine, Georgia tip-toed into Mona Carroll's apartment and closed the door softly behind her. She remembered Mona's admonition about lights. Her heart beat with frantic expectation as she made her way into the pitch dark living room.

"Jerry," she called softly.

There was an answering whisper from the black. Georgia slipped out of her coat and was ready when strong arms enclosed her and held her tight.

"Jerry, isn't this grand?" she murmured, nuzzling her lips against his mouth and forcing her breasts hard against his chest.

His breath came in short gasps. "Swell!" he panted.

"Jerry, can you find the couch?" Her query was a passionate entreaty.

They moved together in the darkness, reaching their objective after bouncing off only one chair. With a rapturous sigh, Georgia slid down into the confines of the couch and curled herself in his arms. Their mouths joined and fused in an almost soldered kiss, made more thrilling by the excited Georgia's response.

"Love me, Jerry!" she breathed excitedly, grasping his hand and leading it to the armpit vent of her dress. The moment his fingers touched the velvet grotto, a shiver ran through him. Spurning this means of entrance for the row of buttons running down her bodice, he loosened them one by one until the pushing tightness of her throbbing breasts beckoned in the stygian gloom.

He cupped one and then the other, which seemed to whip Georgia's desire into a crescendo of delirious bliss. Again and again she forced her already bruised lips to his mouth, parting them in warm ecstasy.

Deserting her breasts momentarily, his hand dropped to her knees and slipped beneath the protective covering of her dress. Georgia tensed when his questing fingers moved above her stocking tops. She was glad that it was summer . . . and hot!

"Oh . . . Jerry!"

From that moment on there was silence. Silence broken only by the plaintive melody of love and the resounding whispers of soul-stirring kisses.

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, Roy Weston rang the bell at Mona's apartment. She evinced some surprise when the door opened and he faced her.

"Roy! What brings you here?"

He stepped inside, his eyes glowering. "I just dropped by to tell you it happened."

Mona's puzzlement was excellent acting. "What's happened?"

"My ward has become involved with a man!"

"Oh!" Her hand went to her mouth in well simulated astonishment. How had he discovered so quickly? Had Jerry and the girl eloped?

"Thanks to you!" he added bitingly.

Mona went cold. "I—I don't understand."

He smiled wryly. "Oh, you understand all right. You see, I suspected something like this would happen. You consented to breaking off far too easily. It didn't look right. Therefore I took every precaution. I had your telephone

(Please turn to page 64)

Favorite Fever

Now Sally is a girl who owns

Emotions enigmatic . . .

When petting is suggested, her

Refusal is emphatic.

"A frigid dame!" the boys exclaim.

"She never gets romantic."

And yet she has a 'love-me' look

That drives her suitors frantic.

*By Wilton E.
Matthews*



She'll sigh beneath a harvest moon,

And flash a coquette's smile.

But not a kiss—for Sally says

That love is not her style.

The truth is, Sally's not so cool—

She displays all this meekness

Because she doesn't trust herself—

(For love is Sally's weakness)!

FRAME-UP

By Gary Robson

EXPECTING the door to be opened by a butler or at least a smartly uniformed maid, it decidedly surprised Avis to be greeted by a sleazy blatant blonde of the peroxide variety.

"Mrs. Kane?" Avis inquired uncertainly.

"Right. You answering the ad? Better come on inside; it's cold out here." It was easy to understand that, inasmuch as the blonde's attire consisted of a gaudy negligee and obviously very little else. "We'll go in here," she continued, leading the way down the hall of the swanky Park Avenue apartment to the boudoir.

It didn't take long for Avis to find out what the position, listed in the paper as that of a "confidential secretary", really was. The confidential part was correct enough; as for the rest—

"If you've ever seen my husband," the blonde smiled, "you might wonder why I'm after a divorce. He's a good lookin' guy and he's fixed me up pretty nice; but he's Park Avenue and I'm still Broadway. We don't match. I want to be free, but I'm not dumb enough to walk out on a bankroll like his. That's where you come in. Get the drift?"

Avis shook her head. "I'm afraid not, Mrs. Kane."

The blonde was seated at a modernistic dressing table, toying with a platinum mounted comb, but the picture was all wrong. It suddenly popped into Avis' head that the proper place for a dame like this was a burlesque theatre dressing room, not a penthouse boudoir. Exhibited for Avis' appraisal was the mirrored reflection of Cordelia Kane's voluptuous and scantily concealed bosom, a powdery white vision of firm breasts bulging against the fragile confines of a brassiere. Aside from this ineffectual garment, a brief pair of step-ins and the negligee, Mrs. Kane was quite nude; a most informal way of receiving a visitor, even if the latter was a woman.

The blonde seemed to be enjoying her guest's uneasiness and to be brazenly conscious of her own lack of attire. Smiling wryly, she went on with the explanations.

"To get the kind of a divorce I want—one

with plenty of do-re-mi—I've got to get the goods on my husband. You know what I mean."

Avis crimsoned, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Kane," she answered angrily, "I applied for a position as a secretary, not a—"

"Cool off, kid," the blonde broke in. "I'm not asking you to supply the evidence, if that's what you're afraid of; though there's a lot of girls who wouldn't turn down the chance. All I want from you is a little detective work. I'm pretty sure that Kenton steps out on me, but I haven't any proof so far. I've got other things to do than to trail him around. As a matter of fact, I've got a heavy date coming up right now so you just sit and listen. I'll explain while I'm getting ready."

"Fire away," Avis replied coolly. If she hadn't been so desperately broke, she'd have walked out then and there; but as it was, she couldn't afford to be snooty.

Arising, the blonde casually discarded the negligee to disclose a statuesque and not unattractive figure clad in no more than the briefly inadequate brassiere and step-ins. Her face was all that stopped her from being beautiful; the rest of her was a perfect example of a modern Venus de Milo. Even Avis, disdainful as she was, was forced to admit that.

"Kenton and I are planning a week-end in Atlantic City," the blonde continued, "but at the last moment I'm going to get a wire from a sick aunt in Boston. I'll make Kenton go to Atlantic City without me. You see, he'll be dead certain of my being far away; he'll feel free as air. I'll have the room next to his in the hotel reserved for you. The rest ought to be easy."

SMILING CONFIDENTLY, she unfastened her brassiere to reveal the firm ripe contours of her voluptuous breasts, her body nude save for the lacy step-ins at her waist. A moment more and this garment, too, had slipped to the floor. To Avis, as she gazed upon the lithe, supple whiteness of the blonde's figure, it seemed that the latter was insouciantly answering a question that had lingered in her thoughts. The question, "I suppose you're wondering why he ever married

me?" And the answer was obvious enough as the blonde, completely unclad, boldly paraded before Avis on her way to the bath at the far end of the room.

"If there's any details you want, let's have 'em," her voice carried to Avis above the sound of the shower spray.

"Give me a minute or two to think it over," Avis pleaded.

"Take five if you like," Mrs. Kane offered.

"After all, what can you lose? You're getting a week-end in Atlantic City, plus a hundred dollars for doing nothing at all."

"I've got to get the goods on my husband. You know what I mean!"



"What about the expenses?" Avis asked, as the blonde emerged, still quite nude, her white flesh tingling from the icy spray.

She hesitated a moment before replying to Avis, choosing a black lace chemise which slipped seductively over her shoulders to fall in an intimate caress over the jutting petulance of her breasts and the flowing curve of her hips. "This is from Ferdie," she winked. "Kenton

doesn't approve of . . . uh, such scanty things. But I do, don't you?"

"About the expenses?" Avis persisted, matter of factly.

"Sure. Here's the dope. If you get the evidence, there's five hundred in it for you. If not, then you'll have to be satisfied with the century."

"I'll do it," Avis agreed finally. Even a

hundred would buy a whole lot of good square meals, while the week-end at Atlantic City wouldn't exactly be a hardship.

"Good," the blonde answered. "Here's the hundred. Take the noon train tomorrow and go to the Altamont Hotel when you get there. I'll wire ahead for your room."

Avis got up to go: "And where shall I wire you, in case I do have something to report?"

Mrs. Kane gave her a curious glance, "Here of course. Where did you think?"

Noting that she hadn't bothered to put on any more clothes than the diaphanous black lace chemise which left her practically *au naturel* and remembering the "heavy date" of which she had spoken, Avis thought plenty! However, she merely nodded, stuffed the bills in her purse and took a discreetly polite departure.

WHEN AVIS ARRIVED in Atlantic City the following afternoon she still had a few qualms of conscience about this mission. It wasn't the most honorable sort of job; but on the other hand, if Kenton Kane didn't step out on a wife like that, he was more of a fool than Avis supposed. And if someone had to tell on him, Avis figured she might just as well be the one to do it.

Upon inquiry, she found that the room had been reserved for her, though the clerk seemed a bit dubious about letting her have it.

"You understand," he murmured diplomatically, "that there is only a connecting bath with the next room, not a private one. You know you asked for it by number."

"I had it once before," Avis put in glibly. "I'm sure it will be satisfactory." Evidently, Mrs. Kane had overlooked nothing!

Escorted to this room by the bellhop, who went through the usual ceremony of adjusting the window shades, the transom and the closet door before receiving his tip, Avis was at last left in solitude to contemplate her next move. Unfortunately, there didn't seem to be any move for her to make. With a prospect of forty-eight hours of watchful waiting before her, Avis began to hope that Kenton Kane wouldn't take too long in succumbing to any lure that might present itself.

She stripped off her clothes, enjoyed a bath and leisurely began the business of dressing again. Glancing into the mirror, she was moved to an idle speculation as to just what it was that made women, outwardly the same, so different from each other. Save for the fact that she was a brunette, her figure compared

admirably with Mrs. Kane's. Her delectably brief chemise was equally enhancing to her willowly slenderness as Mrs. Kane's exotic black lace had been to hers. Avis' hands touched casually upon the firm buoyancy of her exquisitely matched breasts, glided slowly downward over the silken smoothness of her one garment to rest at last upon the sheer flesh of her supple thighs. But, unlike Mrs. Kane, she wasn't the type to indulge overlong in such acute self-appraisal.

She had hardly finished dressing when the sound of someone moving about in the other room suddenly stirred her pulse. She listened but heard nothing. Evidently Kane had come on alone. Anxious to see what sort of person he was, Avis recklessly slipped into the bath and eased toward the door which led to the other room. It was slightly ajar, enough so for Avis to abruptly become aware that the visitor in the next room was alone and also that it was not Kane. It was a blonde, as brazenly peroxide a blonde as Mrs. Kane herself.

Avis watched with rapidly mounting curiosity as this girl hastily began to shed her clothes. In twenty seconds she'd kicked, wriggled and slipped her way out of shoes, dress and stockings, which left her not unattractive figure attired in no more than a dance set, articles of lingerie which were shining examples of how little one might wear without being completely nude. Seemingly at ease in this state of *deshabille* the girl plumped into a chair, lighted a cigarette and nonchalantly began thumbing the pages of a magazine.

It was quite clear to Avis, however, that her mind was on anything but fiction. Just what, was answered a moment later when there came the sound of a key respectfully turning the lock. One glance and the memory of a score of roto-gravure photos told Avis that this was Kenton Kane.

"Ooooh!" A shrill stage scream from the blonde.

SILENCE FROM KANE as he stepped inside and closed the door. A cynical twist of a smile before he spoke: "You know, of course, that you're in the wrong room."

In a pretty show of embarrassment, the girl held the magazine before her half covered breasts, heedless of the fact that it would take a good deal more than two sheets of pulp paper to fully conceal the piquant ivory smoothness of her lithe little figure.

"They . . . they sent me up here," she ex-

plained hesitantly. "I paid for this room. When I came in, I didn't see anyone else's things."

"Do you often go around with your eyes shut?" Kane asked cryptically. "It's entirely possible that you did pay for a room, but not for this one."

The blonde's eyes dropped meekly to the floor; while the magazine in front of her bosom likewise slipped a bit. Enough to disclose the petulant mounds of loveliness pressing impishly against the wispy net of her brassiere. The vision was slightly disconcerting to Avis and she could easily imagine that it might be a good deal more so to Kane.

However, he did show a very fair amount of poise for a man gazing upon the practically nude figure of a rather delectable blonde. For a moment, he seemed to soften, to be about to succumb; then with quick strides he was suddenly across the room, abruptly pulling the girl to her feet.

"Out with it!" he barked grimly. "Tell me how much she paid you for this stunt."

The girl wilted under the bold accusing stare in his eyes. "I don't know what you mean," she stammered.

"My wife of course. I know she paid you to do this. What was it? A hundred?"

The blonde finally confessed. "I needed the money."

Kane nodded, "Sure you did; but I need a little peace." He drew out his wallet, extracted two crisp century notes. "Take this," he ordered curtly, "and the next train to Florida! But don't forget your clothes."

The blonde, knowing that she had met her master and all too conscious now that the briefly transparent lace of her step-ins and brassiere was less than nothing, obeyed without delay.

Avis was more than disappointed as she slipped silently back into her own room. It was obvious that the girl had been sent by the wily Mrs. Kane; but even so, greater men had been trapped by far less. Later, when she went downstairs to dine, she glanced around to see if Kane might be there. He wasn't, and though she lingered as long as possible over her coffee, she was forced to return to the lobby without a sight of him.

Her wire to Mrs. Kane was the soul of brevity. It read: "No report," and Avis might reasonably have added, "No hope," if she hadn't stopped at the book stand for a casual perusal of the volumes offered. Glancing up from one of them she was suddenly startled to see none other than Kenton Kane himself stepping blithely

through the lobby in full evening array. Nor was he alone! On his arm was a gorgeously gowned, seductively slender beauty with the sparkle of bold adventure in her eye.

In desperation Avis rushed back to the telegraph desk. "Did you send my wire?" she gasped.

The man nodded, "Shall I take another?"

Avis hesitated an instant, abruptly wheeled and dashed for the door. She arrived too late; Kane's taxi had already gone. Pursuit and more detective work were out of the question. Regretful at having let him slip through her fingers, but a good deal more hopeful about the immediate future of Mr. Kane's downfall, Avis took the elevator up to her room. That five hundred might yet be hers!

AWAKENING LATE THE next morning with the salty ocean air nipping in through the window, Avis was tempted to take a pre-breakfast dip. Going down to the beach, she found that a stiff wind and a rolling surf had kept away most of the other guests. To Avis, this was an invitation. Discarding her robe, she posed an instant for a deep reviving breath, a modern Diana against the horizon. And, like Diana, she was almost entirely unclothed in a bathing suit that was of the newest and briefest design. Facing her, the most phlegmatic of men would have sensed a rising pulse in gazing upon the scarcely hidden, ripe luscious globes of her firm breasts bulging against their fragile covering, and the sheer, supple whiteness of her legs and thighs.

Without hesitating longer, she sped blithely on, plunging her lissome body into the foaming surf and striking out as though she expected to reach Africa by nightfall. Her strokes carried her farther and farther out, until Avis suddenly began to realize that lack of exercise was telling on her strength. Panicky, she started back for the shore, only to be rudely engulfed by a huge roller that sent a torrent of salty water down her throat and up into her nose. Gasping for breath, she was hit by another and then still another. Floundering helplessly, the sound of a jovial voice nearby was more reassuring than a dozen life preservers.

"Steady there," it ordered with masculine suavity. "I'm coming."

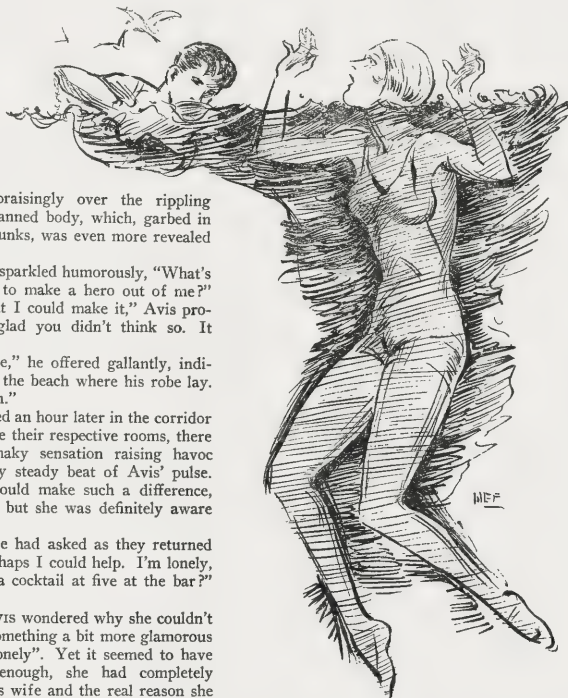
And Avis was ready to be helped. There was no protest as strong arms slipped around her, intimately coming in contact with the pulsing mound of her breast, revealed in a vision of red budded whiteness by a shoulder strap that had

slipped askew. But if the rescue had been a surprise, the rescuer was even a greater one. Reaching shallow water, Avis staggered weakly to her feet to abruptly learn that the bronzed, muscular gentleman leading her by the hand was none other than Kenton Kane in the flesh. And quite handsome flesh, too, Avis reflected as her

the scanty suit had clung precariously to her svelte hips, disclosing in full the tempting, voluptuous beauty of her bared breasts, petulant quivering mounds of ivory.

Nor did that pulse quickening thrill leave Avis with the passing of the hours; rather it increased, and by the time she met Kane for their cocktail

*"Steady there,"
he ordered
with masculine
suavity. "I'm
coming!"*



gaze traveled appraisingly over the rippling symmetry of his tanned body, which, garbed in scant swimming trunks, was even more revealed than hers.

His brown eyes sparkled humorously, "What's the idea? Trying to make a hero out of me?"

"I really thought I could make it," Avis protested, "but I'm glad you didn't think so. It was a close call."

"Flopp down here," he offered gallantly, indicating the spot on the beach where his robe lay. "Catch your breath."

When they parted an hour later in the corridor of the hotel outside their respective rooms, there was a shivery shaky sensation raising havoc with the ordinarily steady beat of Avis' pulse. Why one hour should make such a difference, Avis didn't know, but she was definitely aware that it had.

"Lonely?" Kane had asked as they returned to the hotel. "Perhaps I could help. I'm lonely, too. What about a cocktail at five at the bar?"

ALONE NOW, AVIS wondered why she couldn't have thought of something a bit more glamorous than that word "lonely". Yet it seemed to have worked! Oddly enough, she had completely forgotten Kenton's wife and the real reason she was here. The look in Kenton's eyes had made them seem suddenly unimportant.

She stepped absently into the bath and began to strip off her suit. There was a quick click of the latch and, quite abruptly those eyes were again upon her. A hasty "excuse me" and the closing of the door did nothing to still the wild throbbing of her pulse that had come with the realization that she had revealed herself half nude to him. His entrance had come just when

rendezvous a hundred and one new emotions were tugging at her heart. Discretion, if that can be called an emotion, was not one of them.

When Kane suggested, "Why not dinner in my room?" Avis agreed; and when after a leisurely repast he led her to the cozy intimacy of the divan, she offered no resistance. They had talked but little; now, words were needed even less. There was nothing but the moment, the

present and the realization that they were utterly alone.

Avis' vibrant, supple body was a potent temptation; the creamy whiteness of her shoulders and the jutting rise of her bosom, but half concealed by the decollete of her gown, charms beyond resisting. Kane didn't. The beat of Avis' heart doubled and tripled in new found ecstasy as his lips pressed firmly and possessively upon the luscious scarlet of her own. His fervent murmur, "I'm mad about you, Avis . . . suddenly, fiercely . . ." was sweet music.

But she knew even as she surrendered to his embrace that it could not go on. It wasn't fair play to come down here to trap him and then—to fall in love with him. If he found out; but he wouldn't!

His lips strayed hungrily over the satin softness of her skin, his hands roved boldly over the accentuated curves of her firm breasts, passionately and desirously.

Avis forced herself to rise, "I'm sorry," she faltered. "I—" she broke off, at a loss for words.

"I'm a clumsy fool," Kane muttered contritely.

"No!" she flared at him, almost angry that he guessed the wrong reason. "It's not that. It's just . . . late." A wan smile on her lips, she stepped quickly out of the room and back into her own.

With a dull ache in her heart, she began to disrobe. Shoes were kicked listlessly away; while the gown, unfastened, dropped to the floor to leave her trembling figure attired in the scantiest of undergarments. No brassiere had hampered the allure of her breasts that night; her smooth white nudity was clad in no more than a brief, closely fitting pair of lacy step-ins. Her nubile tipped breasts quivered with pent-up excitement as she stood first on one foot then the other to peel the silken hose from the shapely columns of her legs. Finishing this, she straightened up to catch a fleeting glimpse of her mirrored reflection. She saw her own hands go slowly to her waist, loosening her one garment to leave her slender supple body completely *au naturel*.

A voice broke the stillness; an unmistakable voice, saying, "It's never too late . . . for love."

Avis' hand went instinctively to her breasts, "Kenton," she gasped, conscious of his eyes burning hot and cold upon her white nude flesh.

He needn't have answered. He was there, sweeping her into an embrace that brooked no arguments, conquering her with caresses that made her forget everything else as he picked her up and carried her into the other room.

IT WAS HEAVEN itself to wake up and remember. So Avis thought as she opened her eyes to find the late morning sun streaming through the window. It was agony to know that the end would be all too soon.

What Avis didn't know was the precise sort of ending which was to come. It began with a loudly insistent pounding on the door, a dulcet feminine voice from without, calling too sweetly, "Kenton! Kenton, dear."

Avis called him, but needless to say, he was already awake.

"Good Lord!" he gasped. "That's Cordelia!"

"I'd better go," Avis decided quickly—but not quickly enough.

There had been too many other things on Kane's mind last night and the lock on the door had been forgotten. After a few more knocks, Mrs. Kane discovered this, opened the door and stepped boldly inside, just in time to see Avis' figure half disappearing into the other room.

Arms akimbo, Kenton's wife surveyed the scene with a pretty show of satisfaction, "So it was you who did the trick?" she smiled acidly. "Poor Kenton, I knew you'd slip up some day, but I didn't think—"

Avis, wishing heartily that she could slip into a convenient hole, was decidedly surprised to hear Kenton suddenly demand of his wife, "Never mind what you thought. Tell me why you are here."

Still the same acid smile: "Just to let you know that I'm filing suit for divorce, using this little affair as evidence. My witnesses are in the hall. You'll see me in court. 'Bye!" She made a dramatic exit.

Kane burst into a laugh and Avis succumbed to tears. "You wouldn't think it was funny if you were me," she sobbed. "I wanted love . . . not a lot of newspaper publicity."

Kane drew her close, "You don't know how good a chance you stand of getting just what you want," he whispered. "And as far as the publicity goes, there's a certain little Ferdie in New York who'll get plenty of it . . . unless he can prove that he wasn't with my wife last night. Ex-wife, I should say. You see, darling, it happens that I'm one up on her. My lawyer's waiting to serve her with my divorce suit the minute she returns. In a little while I'll be a free man again, without a cent of alimony to pay!"

"Will you?" Avis murmured, her white arms stealing softly around his neck.

(Please turn to page 55)

FORGIVEN AGAIN

By
Tom
Kane



*"I must ask you
to consider our en-
gagement broken," said
Russell stiffly.*

IT was very comfortable in the small coupe with the radio going. So comfortable, in fact, that both Irene and Walter completely forgot that they were parked just around the corner from Madison Avenue, and not on some secluded road. To be sure, the hour was late, and there was not very much light. Nevertheless, they should not have been doing what they were doing. What were they doing? Well . . . In the first place, they were so close together in one corner of the seat, it was more than a little difficult to make out which was which, and it was impossible to see Walter's hands. The rea-

son for this was that they were under the silk of Irene's dress.

They were young breasts; but they were large, firm and round, and Walter was running his fingers slowly back and forth over them, and Irene was kissing him so passionately it was all he could do to breathe. Her covered thighs were pressed close against his, and he could feel the pounding of her heart against the palms of his hands. Irene, trembling, her eyes bright in the semi-darkness, broke away from him, and her dark head dropped to his broad shoulder. Scarcely audibly, she whispered,



"You really shouldn't be doing this, Walter. After all, I am engaged."

"I know all about that," agreed Walter, one of his hands dropping to her thigh; "I don't think we should be doing it, either. We're very wicked—both of us. I think we ought to be severely spoken to, don't you?"

"If anyone happens to catch us . . . we will be."

Walter moved restlessly, and his fingers commenced to knead the soft flesh of Irene's thigh. In matter of fact tones, he said,

"This is something we might just as well get out of our systems. Neither of us is going to know a moment's peace until we have. I won't

"Wait!" There was an imperious tone in her voice.

He watched her fearfully as she walked slowly to the center of the floor.

be able to be happy with the girl I'm going to marry; and you'll be miserable with this fellow Ames."

"Ever since we've been together on the air, Walter, I've wanted you to kiss me. I've wanted to feel your hands on my bare body. I've wanted . . . oh, darling . . ."

"And yet we don't love each other."

"That has little to do with it," replied Irene dreamily.

She moved closer to him, and so open was her dress in front, and so completely disarranged were her underthings, she was practically naked to the waist. For several minutes, Walter's fin-

Blindly, white with embarrassment, Irene staggered out of the car, pushed roughly past Russell and her aunt and entered the building.

IRENE WAS ALMOST COMPOSED, and inclined to be defiant when, some few minutes later, her aunt and her fiance came upon her in the living



gers played with her large, jutting breasts, and he could feel her hot breath on his cheek. Walter's hand had just slipped under the hem of her skirt, when the door of the coupe suddenly opened, and the head and shoulders of a man came into the small light shed by the dash lamp.

"Very attractive," said an icy voice.

Irene and Walter broke apart like a snapped chain, and Irene rearranged her clothes. In a small, weak voice, she said, "Oh, hello there, Russell . . . didn't expect to see you."

"So I gather," answered the man coldly. He turned to a dim shape behind him. "You were quite right, Miss Abbott, it is Irene's car, and she is inside."

"Hello, Aunt Hettie," croaked Irene. "Russell, may I introduce Mr. Walter Page. Walter, this is Russell Ames, and . . . oh, to hell with it! Let me out of this car!"

room of the apartment. They stared at her, and she stared at them. Russell broke the silence. He said,

"Of course, Irene, this finishes everything between us. You understand that?" Irene nodded. "Would you mind telling me who the man was?"

Irene shrugged her lovely shoulders. "I don't see that it makes any difference; but if it gives you any satisfaction, it was Walter Page. He plays opposite me in the sketch we do on the radio."

"I see. You're in love with him, of course?" "Certainly not!" snapped Irene. "Neither is he in love with me. It was just one of those things."

"Just one too many," amended Russell, stiffly. "I must ask you to consider our engagement over and done with."

"With pleasure." Irene removed the glitter-

ing solitaire which, until this moment, had gleamed on her finger, and handed it over. Russell accepted it awkwardly and slipped it into his pocket. After a moment's hesitation, he said,

"I loved you devotedly. I still love you, and this hurts like hell. But I'm an old-fashioned man . . . and I cannot condone what you've done. Good-bye." Picking up his hat, he walked briskly out of the room. A short silence followed the slam of the door, then, with a lightness she by no means felt, Irene said,

"And that is positively that!" Aunt Hettie sank into a low chair and folded her hands in her lap.

"What a time for a thing like this to happen!" she said. "Really, Irene, you should be a little more careful of the places you choose."

"How was I to know you'd be coming along?" demanded Irene irritably. "I thought you'd be in bed hours ago. Russell also."

"The business took longer than we expected."

"What business? Oh, yes, the house. Is it his, now?"

"It's his, all right." Aunt Hettie took a deep breath, and followed for several seconds the peregrinations of her niece before speaking again. Finally, she said, "Sit down, Irene. I have something to say to you."

"I don't want to sit down. It might interest you to know that I'm a little upset."

"You'll be a damned sight more upset before I'm through with you. Sit down!" Irene did so. Grudgingly. Aunt Hettie continued. "Before we go any further," she said, "how much longer have you to run on this contract of yours?"

"Three weeks."

"Not going to be renewed?"

"No."

"We haven't saved anything. That means in three weeks we'll be out on the street, with nothing to live on . . ."

"Except the fifty thousand dollars we got for the sale of father's house."

"Nearly all of which will go in taxes and back debts," finished Aunt Hettie drily. "And now for the shock. You remember that diamond necklace which belonged to my sister, your mother? The one we could never find when we wanted to pawn it?"

"I suppose you've found it?"

"Exactly!"

Irene stared at her aunt dubiously. "Where?" she finally asked, suspiciously.

"Immediately after the deed was signed and Russell had pocketed it, Mr. Watts, your father's lawyer, handed me a bundle of papers.

On the way uptown in the cab, while Russell was yapping away about something, I glanced through them. I found a note to the effect that your father had deliberately hidden the necklace in a special hiding place in the house."

"Where?" demanded Irene, breathlessly.

"In the master bedroom. The one which will be occupied by the man who might've been your husband. Not only have you lost a husband; you've lost all chances of regaining our house, and you've lost a necklace worth nearly half a million dollars. And all because you like to have your breasts stroked by strange men."

"And, strangely enough, the thing that worries me more than anything is losing Russell. It may surprise you to know that I love that man. Is there any chance of my getting him back, d'you think?"

Aunt Hettie shook her head. "Not if I know the type," she said. "No matter how madly in love with you he is, he won't be able to forgive something he doesn't understand. It would never occur to him to do a thing like that; therefore he can't understand why you should want to. You see, he's already forgiven your flirtations. This was a little more than just a flirtation, and I don't think you'll ever see him again."

Irene listened patiently, then she commenced to pace thoughtfully up and down the room. Presently, her face brightened, and she dropped to the arm of her aunt's chair.

"Auntie, my dear," she said slowly, "I think I've thunk up a plan whereby I can at least get the necklace, and possibly Russell to take me back."

"Tell me."

But Irene would not; and nothing Aunt Hettie could do would make her.

ALTHOUGH THE INVITATIONS had specifically stated that the costumes were to completely conceal the people wearing them, not a great deal of imagination was necessary to recognize ninety percent of the people at Belle Ackerman's fancy dress party.

For instance, Russell was just as obvious as if he had worn no mask at all. His glum, unhappy expression was there for all the world to see. The party was being given in one of the ballrooms of the Waldorf, and the floor was jammed to suffocation. A long bar had been erected for the occasion, and it was against this that Russell sat, thoughtfully sipping highball after highball, and staring glumly at his reflection in the mirror behind the bar.

About him, the party ebbed and flowed, in a

ceaseless tide of activity. Gorgeously dressed girls floated past on the arms of their men. Soft music mingled with the rattle of cocktail shakers, and the air was heavy with perfume, tobacco smoke and the sound of laughter. Russell was no part of it. He was alone.

Presently, he became aware of the sound of a voice. A soft, gentle voice, with just the trace of a foreign accent. He turned his masked face

"You're beautiful," said Russell softly. One hand moved, and the room was plunged into darkness.



a matter of fact." He confessed glumly.

"That is too bad. Me, I was lonely. I do not know people here, and I did not recognize any with their masks." She smiled her brilliant smile. "You looked, how you say, nice . . . and I came over."

"That's very nice of you. Thank you. My name is Russell Ames."

"And mine, Maria Castelinano. From Madrid. I sing here on the concert stage."

"Of course, of course." Russell had never heard of her before. He supposed he should have; therefore he spoke as though her name was as familiar to him as that of the product which is 99 and 44/100 per cent pure.

They lapsed into silence, and Russell found that he was staring rather rudely at what was revealed of Maria's breasts. Of course, he had had quite a few highballs, and he supposed and sincerely hoped that his almost uncontrollable desire to touch and fondle them was the result. Maria did not seem to mind his gaze. As a matter of fact, unconsciously she sat a little

slowly. On the stool beside him sat a girl. She was dressed in the court costume of old Spain, and her décolleté bodice revealed the tops of two large, and firm looking breasts. Her face he could not see, as it was completely covered by a silver mask. There was just a suspicion of flashing, black eyes, and the flash of dazzling teeth on the rare occasions when she smiled.

"Do you mind if I sit here?" she asked, speaking the words carefully.

"Not at all," answered Russell. "Glad to have you. But I'm afraid you won't stay long. I'm not very good company. I'm quite unhappy, as

straighter, and when he asked her what she would like to drink, she moved her stool closer, dropped one elbow to the bar and faced him. The bodice gaped more than ever, and Russell found himself looking into the deep valley which lay between Maria's swollen breasts.

"Is the rest of your body as lovely as your breasts?" Russell shocked himself by inquiring.

"So I have been told," answered Maria, without hesitation.

"Lucky tellers." Russell still could not believe his own ears, let alone his tongue. He must remember in the future. Not so many highballs. He promptly ordered another. Maria nodded, and was handed one, too.

They drank in silence, and the party progressed quite favorably without them. In keeping with his new role, without any build-up whatsoever, Russell suddenly turned to Maria and said,

"Would you care to come home with me?"

"On one condition," answered the girl. "And that is, you will not indulge in the American habit of thinking that because a woman behaves a little unconventionally because she wants to, she is cheap. I am not cheap. If I come home with you, it is because I want to, and not because I'm a cheap woman. That is my condition."

"Your condition is filled. And mine is that you remove your mask."

The brilliant teeth flashed in a wide smile. "If I were not wearing the mask," Maria pointed out, "I would not go home with you. It is the mask, and the air of mystery which intrigues me. I will remove the mask . . . and not come home with you."

"Keep the mask!" said Russell hastily. "Where shall I meet you?"

"In the lobby. I have to get my shawl from the ladies' room."

"I'll be there."

Russell watched her jealously as she threaded her way through the throng, then turned again to the bar. He had three quick ones to keep him feeling as he was. For the first time since that fateful night of the parked car, he suddenly realized he was not thinking about Irene.

RUSSELL LET HIMSELF and his companion into the house with his latchkey, and headed straight for the library. He had never felt so marvelous in his life, and he was delighted to find that his butler had not omitted the tray with its decanter, syphons and glasses. Without

a word being spoken, he mixed two drinks, handed Maria one, and raised his own.

"To us," he said, albeit a trifle thickly, "and 'One Night of Love'!"

"From the motion picture of the same name," hastily interpolated Maria. They drank.

"Shall we?"

"Yes."

They left the library and went upstairs. It was a beautiful room, softly lighted, and Maria instantly felt at home. Russell steered her to a huge divan against one wall, and almost pushed her into it. Sinking down beside her, he gazed into her masked face.

"I'm certain you're beautiful," he said.

"I am. Don't be fearful that you're making love to a hag. You're not, Russell." It was the first time she had used his name, and her slight accent lent it a strange, exotic touch. Russell leaned towards her, placed his arms about her, and she swayed against him.

"This is so much more fun than that stupid party," said Russell, his lips against Maria's throat.

"If it hadn't been for the stupid party," Maria reminded him, "there wouldn't be any fun. Remember that."

"True . . . true . . ." Russell's voice trailed off.

His fingers were clutching at her, and she could feel his nails as they dug, none too gently, into her soft flesh. Maria did not mind. At times, she liked her men rough. This was one of those times. She pressed her lips against his, and her body against his body. She could feel the pounding of his heart, and the quickening of his breath. His hands commenced to caress her naked shoulders. His fingers lingered about her neck, and the tips of them glided gently along her cheeks.

His hands slid down her bare arms, they grasped her hands and they crushed her long, tapering fingers. Then they rose again, and she could feel them on her shoulders. They did not stay there long. Soothingly, Russell stroked the tops of the swelling breasts, then his palms pressed tight against them. The bodice was between his touch and the bareness of Maria's flesh. His fingers insinuated themselves into the loose top of the bodice. Maria broke away. She got to her feet.

"Wait!" and there was an imperious tone to her voice. Russell gazed at her painfully, and for a brief moment his sureness almost deserted him. He watched her fearfully as she walked

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Just For Company

By Algernon Free

FROM where Lucy sat she could look across a court and see other rooms in the hotel.

Especially the room of a young man with sleek blond hair which he brushed back smoothly upon his head. She had often watched him brush it. He did it with two military brushes, brushing and brushing it until it was sleek and smooth. And he was such a nice looking young fellow.

"You wouldn't sit in my lap would you?" he asked boldly.



About thirty, she judged. She wondered what he was doing in the city.

... Wondered if, like herself, he were lonely and blue. The hotel was a reasonably priced one, and she judged that he was not too well off, or he wouldn't be staying in it.

Tonight, coming in after dinner, he sat down with a book. Lucy, sitting alone, had not turned on her light. She liked to sit in the dark and dream ... dream about the time when she would

connect with a job at last, which would lead surely, to Broadway.

But it was a long, long trek, up and down Broadway every day, in and out of agents' offices. And the season was a bad one even for

old timers, let alone young twenty-three-year-olds whose only theatrical experience had been in stock in the middle west.

She'd supposed that her fresh young beauty would get her some place; and it did, in a way ... most of the agents and producers she met wanted to take her places ... but they didn't mention contracts first. They might, she realized, mention contracts afterward; but Lucy didn't want to play like that. She wanted to make her way on her talent.

The young man across the way stopped reading his book. He yawned, and looked dejectedly out the window as though he were bored stiff. Every night he stayed in this way. She wondered if he were looking for a job too.

Tired and footsore, Lucy started to get undressed in the dark. This was a simple process; much simpler than getting dressed. She pulled her frock over her head and stood in brassiere, panties, stockings and shoes. She took off her panties and massaged herself where they had bound a little . . . still watching the young man across the way. And then suddenly her blood almost stopped circulating in her vibrant young body. He had gotten up. Pulled open a drawer. Taken out a gun. There it lay, glistening and shining upon his bureau top. He was looking down at it reflectively. And he was so young and handsome and so sad looking.

Petrified with emotion Lucy watched without moving. She saw him take the gun over and sit down again in the chair with it in his hand. His eyes held a far away look.

What to do? Lucy wondered frantically. And then suddenly she had in inspiration. The way he was sitting he faced her window. She looked around the court. There were not any other windows where anybody would be likely to see. She hastily put her panties back on. Took her curtains out of the way. Snapped on her light. Pretended to be occupied with combing out her hair.

SHE SAW THE YOUNG MAN rise. Go to his windows and stare. She could see him clearly through the reflection in her mirror when she turned her back toward the window and looked into the mirror. She contemplated her supple, lissom curves and wondered if they were sufficient to give a young man something to live for. They were. There was not a surplus ounce of flesh anywhere.

Her hips were slim and svelte. The kind that the average woman yearns for when she rubs her hands over her hips. Her thighs were straight narrow columns, just rounded out enough to suggest the delights of womanhood, without being severely curved. Her throat was slim and fitted with interesting little shadows for counterpoint. And her black hair strongly accentuated the whiteness of her skin.

And then she saw the light suddenly snapped out in the young man's room. She wondered what on earth would happen now. Almost held her breath . . . expecting to hear a shot almost any moment. But, after what seemed like ages

had passed, her phone rang. She heard a deep, burry voice on the phone. The voice said:

"Are you the young lady in four hundred and eight?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am the young man in four hundred and eighty-eight. I just wanted to warn you . . . that is, I wanted to say; well, anyway, I called to tell you that—" he paused in embarrassment and she realized that he had stepped to the phone impulsively, probably told the operator to give him the room opposite his in the court on the same floor . . . intending to warn her that he could see her . . . or perhaps he was just irrevocably tempted to call her on the phone.

"Yes?" Lucy prompted.

"Well, anyway," he went on helplessly, "I wanted to tell you something, only, only—"

Remembering that it was a matter of life and death Lucy boldly said:

"Perhaps if you were to come over here?"

"Could I, for just a moment; there really is something I'd like to tell you . . . warn you about."

"Yes, by all means come over."

He hung up the receiver in a jiffy. Lucy flew to her closet and selected her prettiest *robe de nuit*. On the top shelf of the closet there was a bottle of rye whiskey which she kept to pick her up in the morning. She took down the bottle. Maybe it would help him to face what he had to face, too.

Presently she heard his knock at the door. The hotel was one of the sort where practically anything went providing one were quiet about it. She let him in. He was even handsomer at close range than he was across the court.

"Won't you sit down?" she invited, seeing that he was decidedly timid.

" . . . Well," he said, "I oughtn't to stay but a minute; still—" He sat down. She poured out a glass of the good rye whiskey and handed it to him. He looked up at her questioningly. She smiled warmly down at him. Poured a glass for herself. Gave a toast:

"Here's to health and wealth and all around good luck."

HE GULPED DOWN HIS DRINK. The glasses were generous ones and the rye was stout stuff. It certainly ought to give him courage, she reflected. When he had felt the shock of the liquor he flushed a little, smiled up at her:

"Gee," he said, "it's good to be talking to a human being again. This is a lonely town."

Everybody acts so impersonally in it. I don't suppose they mean to be deliberately unkind, but it certainly gives a fellow the jitters."

"I know what you mean," Lucy confirmed. "I get the jitters from loneliness sometimes myself; but I always try to remind myself that everybody who succeeds has to go through those

you that you had better pull down your window shades when you undress, because on the other side of the court—!"

"Then you saw me," she said boldly.

"Yes."

"Well, so you won't feel too embarrassed about it, I'll make a confession too—I saw you



periods, and it's the ones who can get through them stoutly that matter."

"Yes, I suppose so; but it's different with you. You're beautiful. You'd never lack for company."

"Of a sort," she agreed, "only . . ."

"I kind of thought," he told her, "that you were an innocent girl who didn't know very much about New York, from the way you—" he blushed.

"What is it?" she prompted. "You wanted to tell me something, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did, but—"

"Why don't you go right ahead?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I wanted to tell



"Yes, you'd better go right away," she gasped.

quite clearly. I saw you take up that gun. That's why I let you see me—I thought maybe it would take your mind off what you were going to do."

"Oh!" Instead of looking embarrassed he looked relieved. "You must have thought that I was going to . . . make away with myself . . . well, it wasn't that. That's a new kind of gun. I invented it. I'm here trying to interest manu-

factors in the patent. It can be adjusted to different sizes of cartridges. It'll shoot anything from a .22 to a .45, according to the way you adjust it."

"Oh!" Lucy was thoroughly confused. He would laugh at her now she suspected. But he didn't. He leaned forward earnestly.

"Say," he said, "then you really pulled that stunt because you thought I was going to commit suicide! You're a swell girl. Why, after all, should you care whether I killed myself or not?"

Lucy was stumped. There was no answer to this, except to pour them both a second glass of rye.

"I'm relieved," she said. "Been a little morbid I guess. Had some trouble selling myself to theatrical producers; and I suppose I thought everybody else must be in a mood something like my own . . . you get that way if you don't watch out."

"Yes," he agreed, "I'd noticed it. Say, look, I'm not so terribly well off; but I've got plenty to finance me until I sell the manufacturing rights on this revolver of mine, which I'm sure to—there are several manufacturers dickering for it now . . . there's only the matter of getting the proper sort of contract with them. I don't live here. I live on the West Coast, Southern California. Suppose you and I could form a committee to keep each other from getting bored or morbid while we're trying to get our affairs squared around?"

"That," Lucy said, "would, I think, be just swell."

"Well, then, all we've got to do is to start getting well acquainted. You know, I've got a sister about your age. She often sits with me and talks about things, and I talk to her . . . it's that that I miss in New York more than anything else, to tell you the truth. You wouldn't sit in my lap would you?" She saw that he was decidedly emboldened by the rye now.

" . . . Well, yes, in a sisterly way," she agreed. She went over and sat down in his lap. At once he put his arm around her. Pulled her closely to him. She was a trifle embarrassed. Underneath the sleazy silk of the *robe de nuit* she had nothing on but her extraordinarily smooth skin. And because it was smooth, she slipped around most enticingly inside the silken garment. She saw that this was having a decided effect upon him. Also, the rye was having a decided effect upon her; she didn't, usually, drink as much as she had tonight. The thought of the possibility of his suicide had upset her

so much that she had been prompted to be bolder than usual with the bottle.

One of the shoulders of the *robe de nuit* slipped away. Before she could replace it his mouth had come down upon her bare shoulder. His mouth was hot and damp. She shivered all over and hid her head upon his shoulder.

"I don't know what's gotten into me," he apologized. "You've been so kind and sweet, I shouldn't presume, I know . . . but there's something about you—well, you just about set me mad, that's all I can say."

"You don't make me feel any too placid," she confessed.

"Maybe I'd better go back to my room now. Can I meet you tomorrow, for luncheon? And maybe dinner, and then perhaps take in a show . . . and that way neither one of us would be a bit lonesome."

"All right," she agreed. "That'll be just fine . . . I do like you . . . and I could like you even a lot more . . . but, you see, I've sort of made resolutions . . . and I want to keep them if I can . . . and so . . ."

"I understand perfectly," he sympathized. "I'd be the last one on earth to want a girl to abandon her good resolutions." He stood up. She noticed that he was very tall. Her head would just about fit upon the place on his shoulder next to his neck. She wanted him to go, for her peace of mind; and yet, another side of her wanted him to stay.

"Well, I must be going," he said, and made no move to go. She supposed he was recalling the view of her he had gotten from across the court. Suddenly his arms went around her and he pulled her to him desperately. His mouth covered hers in a long kiss. When it was over she was faint with delight. He held her deliciously close, and her head dropped down upon his shoulder; she tried to take her arms from around his neck, but for some reason or other her will would not function in this respect and she simply could not let go of him.

It was he who gently disengaged her arms.

"Remember your resolutions," he said softly. "You and I are going to be great pals and I wouldn't for the world do anything to spoil it right at the outset; even if I have known you for only a very short while I'm terribly fond of you already."

"And I'm fond of you," she gasped; " . . . and, yes, you had better go right away."

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Married Men Preferred

By Chloe Madison

GOOSE!" Joyce Arnold, blonde and voluptuous, was grinning at the lovely redhead perched on the side of her bed. "You mean to tell me you're going to Philadelphia with Wally Dwight, and you haven't even considered the clothes you're taking?"

Sibyl Crompton shook her flaming head.

"I—I thought, since it's a business trip, I'd just wear this—and perhaps take my black chiffon for dinner."

The blonde laughed merrily. "You precious darling!" Her hands indicated the splendid young breasts so sinfully concealed beneath a neat navy business dress, and then she became serious.

"Come on, child," she began, "Mamma's taking you on a shopping binge. It's about time this old Truckard woman was retired as Wally's secretary, and you took her place!"

Sibyl stared at her doubtfully.

"Now, no arguments, darling!" Joyce commanded. "Have you any money?"

"Oh!—about two hundred and fifty for a rainy day!"

"The rainy day's here!" she laughed, and without another word, hopped out of bed, and hurried to the bath room. Sibyl stared after her. It was mad! Stark mad! Her savings —

Still, if only for these two days she could make him think of her as a woman, and an attractive one at that, wouldn't it be worth investing at least a part of her "nest egg"? No one suspected, not even Joyce, that the very presence of big blond Wally sent little thrills of rapture up and down her spine. And when he smiled, showing those glistening teeth and marvelous dimples, her knees refused to support her. Yes—Joyce's suggestion was worth consideration.

"Grab your hat! I've broken all previous records at quick dressing!" Joyce commanded, standing at the bedroom door.

"Vile temptress!" Sibyl grimaced at her stunning friend. Then capitulating, she tilted a navy felt hat pertly over her right eye. For a moment she studied the gorgeous reflection in the mirror. She did have lovely skin, creamy white, and features far above average, but in

her present outfit—who'd ever notice her loveliness, she wondered thoughtfully?

WALLY DWIGHT STOOD impatiently at the train shed. What the deuce could be keeping Miss Crompton? Damn it! He'd tried to pick the most efficient girl in the office, barring his good old dependable Truckard, and here it was two minutes to train time and no sign of her.

The scowl vanished from his good looking face when he noticed a particularly attractive girl in a brown jacket and plaid skirt making her way through the crowd. Boy! There was something worth looking at! Shame none of the girls at the office had hips like that! What ripping ankles! A broad sailor hid her eyes, but a glimpse of vivid titian hair showed under the brim. The devil! Was she smiling at him? Sure enough.

"Am I late?" the soft, but efficient voice of Miss Crompton asked. Wally shook his head, gulping. Had he been blind for the past two years? And deaf also? This bewitching creature had a voice like a cello . . . and *looks!!!*

"Just a moment, Miss Crompton!" Wally smiled, "I've barely time to see about these tickets." And rushing to the desk, he excitedly exchanged the parlor seats for a drawing room.

The conductor was bawling "All aboard!" when Wally carried Sibyl's ostrich skin overnight bag to their drawing room.

"This comfortable?" he asked, helping her off with her jacket. His eyes strayed to the daringly cut neck of her blouse. An entrancing hint of the delights under the silk fascinated him. Maybe this trip wouldn't be all business, after all!

Snuggling into the upholstery, Sibyl crossed her legs, and the temptingly filled stockings gave him something more to think about. The cutely dimpled knees, quite visible through the sheer hose, were about the most perfect he had ever seen. Now to get acquainted!

WATCHING THE COURSE of Wally's eyes, Sibyl sat tight. Two dollars was very cheap indeed, she reflected, for a pair of stockings



that could bring that sort of expression to Wally Dwight's eyes.

Despite his appreciative glances, Elizabeth, N. J., slipped by without much progress being made. Sibyl decided there must be something wrong with her technique.

"Mr. Dwight," she began, going easy on the efficiency angle, "I wonder if you'd order me a cold drink?"

He cursed himself for not remembering before that drinks were available in this enlightened age aboard trains. God bless repeal! Nothing like a nip to break the ice.

A grinning porter made prompt response to the call of the bell and in a few minutes two tinkling gin rickies were before them.

"Here's to our better acquaintance, Miss Crompton!" Wally toasted, and after a sip—

"Incidentally, it's quite new for me to drink with a girl and call her Miss. Your initials are S. A. C. Sally? Sylvia?"

"Sibyl Anne, at your service, Mr. Dwight!" Her head tipped to one side coquettishly, and her eyes were naughty.

"Righto, Sibyl. But it's Wally from now on!"

When they shook on this, across the little improvised table, the soft, coral tipped hand

"So this is the efficient Miss Crompton!" he murmured, drawing her close again. Sighing contentedly, Sibyl relaxed in his warm embrace. Little ripples of delight flowed under her burning skin, as time and again their lips met in long, ecstatic kisses. His hand fondled the soft, white shoulder, and finding courage, slid to the proudly jutting breast, that needed no brassiere to aid the perfection of its roundness. Sibyl



was most encouraging, and in a moment Wally was on the lounge beside her.

"Young lady, where have you been hiding all this loveliness for the past two years?"

"Under correct business attire—and efficiency," she grinned impishly.

"A crime!" and with this summation, his arm found its way around her shoulder. Answering the invitation of those upturned lips, tempting and as ripe as pomegranates, he drank thirstily of the nectar.

felt quivers of ecstasy seethe through every crevice of her body. But she realized this wasn't the time nor the place.

"Wally," she panted, her body stiffening, "is this the way you always treat secretaries?"

"Nonsense!" he breathed, again seeking her lips. But Sibyl withdrew from his caress, and lit a cigarette.

"Aren't you going to be nice to me, young lady?" he asked.

"We'll see!" She smiled tantalizingly. "If you behave now, and be a patient boy—"

THE BALANCE of the trip was gay enough, with the rich undercurrent of vibrating emotions held in abeyance. There were more gin rickies and casual kisses, kept by mutual restraint within reasonable limits. When the train pulled in at Broad Street Station at six o'clock, both Sibyl and Wally knew a tormenting impatience.

"Wally, dear," Sibyl asked as they taxied to the hotel, "what time must you see Mr. Sommers?"

Wally stole a hasty kiss. "Umm-m. Just now I wish never. But he'll be around the hotel about nine, I believe. Then, I talk to his board of directors in the morning. Tonight's the important part, though. I either make the grade, or I don't. The directors do whatever the old tyrant tells them. But let's forget that. We have two delicious hours to ourselves," he finished, slipping his arm around her slender waist and drawing her close.

Wally lingered at the door of Sibyl's room, while the bell hop waited to escort him to his suite but several doors down the hall.

"What do you say to having dinner in my sitting room," he asked. "While you're washing up a bit, I'll order. All right?"

"Quite perfect! Shall I dress?"

"You do," Wally laughed, "and you'll see what happens to the dress!"

Luxuriating in her delicately perfumed bath, Sibyl relived the afternoon. She was mad, stark mad, she knew, to be imagining his sensitive hands exploring her body, when she should be thinking of tricks to win from him the secretaryship; but what did that mean, compared with this incessant pulsating of her body?

Swiftly, she dressed, selecting step-ins of the most heavenly blue chiffon, that hugged tightly her slim waist, then flared over the lusciously curved hips and thighs. She hesitated for a moment, then finally decided to wear the matching brassiere, so transparent that the hard little rose tips were plainly visible through the filmy fabric.

Good, wise Joyce! Never would Sibyl have dreamed of spending more for a negligee than for an evening gown, but she'd been literally forced into it. And what a negligee! Soft violet velvet, dramatic with its full, long sleeves, molding her gently curving body into a thing of sensuous grace, the garment was expressly made to captivate the most wily male.

Wally gasped with delight when this dazzling

vision entered his room. Her golden red hair formed a halo about the lovely eager face. Swaying on feet altogether invisible beneath folds of velvet that trailed regally behind her, she stretched out both arms.

IMPETUOUSLY, HE TOOK both hands, raising them in turn to his lips, a gesture utterly foreign to him.

"My princess!" he murmured adoringly.

A pretense was made of eating the truly epicurian meal Wally had ordered, and they sipped but little of the champagne the *maitre d'hotel* had so highly recommended.

"I'm still marveling at not having discovered you before," Wally smiled, as he toyed with his avocado pear.

"Well," Sibyl smiled, "I must admit I wasn't quite so slow in discovering you, Wally Dwight!"

"Darling!" he cried. The gleam in his eye held an unmistakable meaning. Little tremors under her milky flesh warned Sibyl that now was the time to make her bargain, or all was lost. No use waiting. . . . But her musings were interrupted. Dropping his napkin, his lithe figure made its way around the tiny table that separated them. When his arm fell across her shoulder, and his feverish lips again found the lush fragrance of her own, all she could manage to say was, "My dear, my darling!"

Guiding her to the softly pillowed sofa, Wally smiled down amorously.

"You're adorable!" he breathed.

Sibyl fingered the deep dimples at either side of that firm, dear mouth, while his hand found the opening so cunningly concealed in the folds of velvet. Pulling the clinging fabric apart, he was dazzled by the luminous expanse of fragrant flesh, so white against the purple background.

Gasping joyously, his hand slid beneath the tantalizing brassiere, pressing gently the ripe beauty of her gorgeous breast. With a cry of delight, the glorious redhead snuggled into the hollow of his shoulder, and kissing him, gave herself up to the exquisite thrill of the moment.

Her eyes and hair, neck and shoulders, each felt in turn the burn of his hungry lips, while his exploring hand found its way about her tempting body. Fresh ripples of ecstasy flowed through her at each turn, until breathless, she lay inert in his strong possessive embrace.

"Come darling," he whispered, and lifting her trembling body, he carried her to the other room—



"YOU ADORABLE KID!" Wally murmured, as he helped her adjust the lovely negligee. "Now that I've found you I'm not going to let you out of my sight. What do you say? Old Truckard deserves a good rest after all these years of faithful service. Want to adorn that private office, with the lettering 'Wallace J. Dwight' guarding it from intrusion?"

"You dear! I'll adore it," she sighed, thinking with satisfaction the display of goods had done its job, despite the fact that she hadn't played the game with the greatest of wisdom.

"Righto! We'll order some fresh champagne—this is flat now—to toast my new secretary," and calling service, he again settled down beside Sibyl on the sofa.

"After the drink, young lady," Wally warned, "the boss is chasing you back to your room. Efficient business clothes are the order! Don't forget! Allure, right now, is out, for old Sommers is a funny duck."

Sibyl sighed, running her fingers through his tousled blond hair. "I hate to go—tell me more about Sommers."

"Well," Wally began, fondling her soft hand, so warm in his own, "he's typical Philadelphia—very much opposed to just this sort of thing. Was a great friend of Dad's, and it's only out of consideration of his memory, I suppose, that he's even giving me a chance in this deal. Thinks I'm a bit of a rounder, I'm afraid. So you see we'll have to go carefully, old dear. Never do to let the old fellow—"

Wally paused at a sharp rap on the door.

"Ah, here's the champagne," he murmured, and lifting the coral tipped hand to his lips for a brief moment, he strode to the door, unlocking it.

"Mr. Sommers!" Sibyl chilled at the name. As in a dream, she heard Wally stammering. "—weren't expecting you so soon. Er—er—we haven't dressed yet. Resting up a bit after the trip. You haven't—uh—met Mrs. Dwight, have you?"

Sommers, conservatively correct, gray mustached and smiling, walked over to meet Sibyl. Regaining a hold on her faculties, she rose and extended her hand.

"I'm delighted, Mr. Sommers. Wally has spoken of you so often."

"Well!" The old fellow was smiling merrily. He turned to Wally. "You certainly deserve congratulations, Dwight. A charming wife! Most charming! When did the happy event take place?"

Wally's face was crimson, but he hoped Sommers wouldn't notice.

"Two months ago," he replied. "Er—a—didn't you get an announcement?" and as the guest shook his head, Wally continued his oil pouring. "Those stupid women at the office! Always forgetting something—however—"

THE CATASTROPHE AVOIDED, the men went into a discussion of business. Sommers was de-

lighted with young Dwight's plans. A chip off the old block, he called him. So when the champagne arrived, a toast was drunk to the bride, and the business was in the bag for Wally.

"You see, son," Sommers said, patting Wally on the back, "I was a bit timid about you. Feared you might be too—too unstable to handle so large an account. Was young myself once! And single men—however, meeting the lovely Mrs. Dwight, those fears have vanished."

He smiled at his hostess, and took her hand. "And now—how about inviting an old man to dinner, Mrs. Dwight? I'll be in New York next week, and a home meal, you know—"

Meeting the old fellow's trusting eyes, Sibyl could not but press a warm welcome. And so the arrangements were made.

The door at last closed on Sommers, Sibyl's eyes met Wally's beseechingly. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"Wally," she groaned, "what shall we ever do?"

Wally laughed, then kissed the lovely bewildered face.

"Do? Simplest thing in the world, darling! It took an old timer to put the idea in my head, though! Become Mrs. Dwight, of course!"

JOYCE WAS AWAKENED from a refreshing sleep. This time it was the persistent ringing of the telephone.

"Darn it!" she murmured drowsily, making her way to the living room.

"Western Union calling Miss Joyce Arnold." All traces of sleep vanished at the curt words.

"We have the following telegram for you—"

"I've lost my job stop Miss Truckard retaining post as Dwight's secretary at my suggestion stop many thanks.

(Signed) Mrs. Sibyl Anne Dwight."

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“Mrs. Murphy, I’d love to take that ol’
rake of yours home for a couple of days.”

LOVE C.O.D.

By
Raoul Hunt

PROPER social secretaries didn't indulge in day dreams, Phyllis told herself reproachfully; then promptly burrowed deeper into the satiny covers to continue the dream that curved her lips to a soft secret smile. After all, maybe proper social secretaries didn't have the same ideas about life that she did, and dreaming was one escape from her present routine—a routine that was getting pretty darned monotonous if you asked her. Or even if you didn't ask her. But, though she might day dream about love, Phyllis hadn't changed her mind about marrying for money.

She raised her arms to tousle the brown curls into a riotous tangle as she thought about marriage, the movement catching the sheer fabric of her pajamas tightly over two luring mounds that were saucy invitations. Phyllis wanted her married life to be full of love and things, not bound in by scrimping and worrying about bills. "Love in a cottage" might sound swell in a song, but it didn't always work out. She swung her legs over the edge of the bed to grope with pink toed feet for her tiny mules. Then, shrugging out of her pajamas with an enticing flaunt of rotund little hips, she walked over to regard herself in the full-length mirror.

A starry eyed vision of pink and white loveliness stared back at her as the polished glass reflected the tantalizing charm of her vibrant youthfulness. If any healthy Lothario had seen her at this moment her money marrying quest would have been successfully ended. But she was alone in the house, even the servants having accompanied Mrs. Carlton, her employer, to the country house. So the appealing figure before the mirror had only its own lovely counterpart as spectator. Which, Phyllis reflected moodily, didn't help much. Slender hands caressed the slim seductiveness of her waist, then slid up to cup the gorgeous fullness of her breasts as she thought of the lonely months she had been working here. Waiting for a wealthy husband had turned out to be a pretty tiresome business, but this gal was through with penny pinching, and one could always catch up on love.

An insistent buzz sounded from the front hall and, stepping quickly into a filmy pink chemise, she wrapped a gay robe close about her molded curves and hurried down the stairs. Maybe the caller was one of the more interesting young men who visited her employer occasionally . . . eligible young men with illustrious names and bank accounts to match.

The caller was young all right, and Phyllis' eyes seemed to say he was interesting, but he was a stranger. A very admiring stranger too, as he took in the charming girl who stood before him hugging a near-transparent robe to a revealing tightness about her body.

"Well?" Phyllis tried to sound disapproving of his frank admiration but it wasn't very convincing. Maybe this was because of the little pulse that beat in her throat at the latent heat in the brown eyes of the tall young man.

The word broke his entranced gaze. "Pardon me," the white flashing teeth were a pleasant surprise in his browned face, "but I was expecting a maid to answer and you . . . well, you sort of . . ." he floundered and looked so helpless that Phyllis took laughing pity.

"Surprised or shocked, which?" She was trying to place this tall handsome man whose look was doing such surprising things to her heart. Then her eyes fell to the black case he was carrying.

HE TORE HIS EYES AWAY from her delicious charms to answer her questioning glance, "I'm Larry Richmond, of the Tru-Weave Lingerie Mills. We're using this special personal contact campaign to introduce our new lines to the public."

Phyllis felt a mad desire to laugh. She, determined to marry money, letting a door-to-door salesman get her all bubbly with romantic notions! A salesman who was no doubt lucky if he earned thirty dollars a week. She scowled at him suddenly. Darn him anyway. What right did he have being this good looking when it was hard enough for her to stick to her dollar search as it was?



"Pardon me, but I was expecting a maid to answer," he said shyly.

"You see," he continued, "we feel that interesting a few prominent women like yourself, Mrs. Carlton, will insure success for our line."

A dimple appeared in one rounded cheek as Phyllis smothered a protest. So this salesman, working from some vague sales lead, had taken her for the wealthy widow. Phyllis looked down at her own shapely charms and thought of the outsized bulges of her portly employer. She giggled at the thought and led the way to the drawing room. This was going to be fun. After all, she was bored and he was good looking.

Phyllis seated herself on the lounge, the robe falling away to reveal the marble warmth of one rounded leg that disappeared into the brief hem of the chemise. Larry's eyes caressed each inviting curve of her relaxed body and then, as though remembering this was business not pleasure, he bent to open his presentation kit. Phyllis felt a little thrill tingle her flesh as she recalled that sometimes people mixed business with pleasure.

"Now this," Larry held out a flesh colored dance set of cloudy silk panties and brassiere, "is one of our latest numbers. Do you—er, ever wear lingerie of this type?" Phyllis was glad that he didn't have that cool impersonality of most lingerie salesmen. Maybe he'd taken this job just recently because he needed the money. Money! She reminded herself that Larry Richmond was a penniless young salesman, no matter how attractive he was. But merely talking to him didn't mean she was losing her grip.

She took the dance set and held it up to catch the sunlight in its delicate tints. Her chemise, tightening suddenly, lifted the two little hillocks to even a saucier pout. The lacy bodice was inadequate to restrain the surging globes and Larry's eyes smoldered with sudden desire as two lovely half-moon swells crept above the filmy barrier. He held his breath but she lowered her arms just in time, and answered his question.

"These are what I do wear, usually," she said softly, smiling at his interested gaze, "but you rang just as I was dressing, so . . ." she spread her hands in an expressive gesture. He followed the gesture to where the silk dipped in under the firm breast to a waist of breath taking daintiness then curved out again to outline the rhythm of graceful hips.

HIS EYES SAID THAT it was a shame to conceal such attractions even beneath such sheer transparency. He seated himself beside her to

explain the added features of Tru-Weave lingerie. Phyllis could feel the strong warmth of his thigh against her, and her moist lips parted in a little sigh of anticipation. It was no use fighting it, she decided. When a girl liked to love as well as she liked to love and be loved—Her dollar-marrying surely wouldn't be ruined by just one brief vacation from this damned routine.

"What?" She jerked out of her reverie to look into brown eyes that held a quizzical smile in their depths. Depths that mirrored a world of glowing possibilities.

Larry repeated his question, "I asked if I might measure you for this set, since you are interested in it."

She looked at his strong hands that were meant for strong masculine things, not for measuring women for lingerie. Then, as his eyes held hers with a stirring promise, she let the robe slip slowly off her shoulders and rose to stand before him in all the intimate appeal of a lovely woman in sheer lingerie.

He drew a long breath at the picture she made. The pink chiffon hugged her body with a soft caress that made his arms ache to press her close against him. The chemise followed with clinging accurateness each lovely contour of her desirable body down to where the hem lay in attractive contrast against the white voluptuousness of her thigh. Larry reached the tape around her, his hands shaking as her tumultuous bosom surged restlessly against its frail restraint.

He drew the tape tight across the yielding softness of her luscious white arcs and Phyllis shivered ecstatically as his fingers brushed the captivating fullness. She leaned against him softly and the warmth of her scented body through the thin garment was too much. With a hoarse croon he gathered her to him and claimed her red lips in a searing kiss. She breathed with little gasps, reveling in the hard flatness of his chest that crushed against her twin lures.

Larry picked her up and carried her to the davenport, his fingers caressing the throbbing treasures beneath her bodice. Marrying men for money was forgotten as she fitted the molded beauty of her body into his arms and relaxed into a delicious lethargy of passion.

Larry's lips sought the sweetness of her mouth then roved in a shivery line of kisses down from her rounded chin until his burning lips were crushed against the cool shadowed valley between rounded crescents of alluring flesh.

Her hands behind his head, Phyllis pressed him close to her, her fingers straying along the back of his neck. As she responded deliriously to his caresses she had one last fleeting thought of gladness that she had been alone when this man had called. Sunbeams filtering through the tall windows danced in gay abandon of agreement.

AEONS LATER, OR HAD it been only minutes, she tore her lips reluctantly from the moist thrill of his mouth. She had remembered that this was to be only a brief interlude and she was still determined to marry money. "Now," her voice was a tender shakiness, "shall we consider the sale made? After all it was to sell lingerie that you came, and there's no money in this playing around." Her attempt at lightness failed as he pushed her away to look at her with eyes that held a hurt surprise.

"So we were just playing around, were we?" His voice was a sudden chill steeliness, "So the wealthy widow was amusing herself with the pauper salesman, is that it?" he asked in bitter mocking. "And I'd thought that at last I'd found a girl that had everything and still let her heart rather than her bank book guide her!" She made an involuntary movement toward him then stopped as his eyes blazed with scorn.

"I won't bother to write out an order since it's obvious you aren't really interested in buying but only in amusing yourself." She bit her trembling lip at the scathing irony as he snapped the case shut and, jamming his hat on his head, stood glaring at her.

"Not at all interested," Phyllis said coolly, feeling a sudden anger rising; anger that was mostly at herself. "And you, would you have been such an exciting salesman if I hadn't been the wealthy Mrs. Carlton?"

"But you're not!" They both wheeled and Phyllis gasped in dismay. There in the door stood her employer with a luggage-loaded chauffeur. She'd returned and their argument had kept them from hearing her entry. Phyllis breathed a little sigh of thanksgiving that Mrs. Carlton hadn't returned ten minutes sooner.

The social ladder stalked across the drawing room to look accusingly at her secretary. Phyllis smoothed the brief chemise to a less revealing position about her creamy thighs and reached for her robe; a charming flush creeping down over her neck to tinge the white swells that were visible above her bodice.

"Hmph! Seems to me my secretary has some charms other than being able to attend to my social affairs." There was a grudging note of

admiration in the fleshy widow's voice as she inspected Phyllis' exposed figure with frank interest. The chauffeur was anything but bored as he edged in from the doorway to obtain a better view.

"Your secretary!" Larry turned from Mrs. Carlton to glare down at the thoroughly cowed girl, "So, aside from being a dollar loving schemer, you're a cheap little pretender as well!" Ignoring the slack-mouthed interest of Mrs. Carlton and the chauffeur, Larry strode from the room, the bang of the front door his only good-bye.

Mrs. Carlton snorted, "Determined young man. Good looking, too," she added slyly. Then her face softened with pity as Phyllis crumpled into one corner of the lounge, her shoulders shaking with deep sobs. "But, my dear, if it means that much, why let him walk out? Forget about the dollars, child. I've let the thoughts of them keep me from having men friends since Mr. Carlton died, and I never have any fun. That is," she looked at her handsome chauffeur who winked in a strangely intimate manner, "hardly ever."

PHYLLIS SNIFFLED BROKENLY into a pillow, "I don't give a damn about the dollars, but what can I do now? He'll never believe me," she sat up and tried to think of some way out, then jumped up in sudden determination. "Well, if telling him I love him will bring him back, he's practically here, door-to-door salesman or not. For once hard hearted Phyllis is going to do some crawling to make up for all that dam-fool spouting about needing fortunes to be happy." The thought of Larry's strong arms around her, his searching hands fondling the responding curves of her body, his sensuous lips crushed against her full mouth in fiery adoration—all of those things and she had dared to think dollars could have made a difference!

She dressed faster than she had ever dressed before and a five dollar tip had prompted some wild driving by the cab driver but it seemed ages before she found the building that housed the Tru-Weave offices. She left the elevator and hurried down the hall to the spacious suite of offices.

The blonde at the information desk was mad-deningly slow. "Yeah, Mr. Richmond's in." She reached a hand into her breast-filled bodice and adjusted one of the bulky spheres to a more comfortable position before asking the impatient Phyllis, "Have you an appointment?"

"Appointment? To see a salesman!"



The blonde raised mocking eyebrows, "Thought you said you knew him? He's no salesman, he's the only son of old man Richmond, the owner of True-Weave Mills, you know. I guess maybe you got mixed up 'cause he's been calling on some of the better class customers to get their reaction to this new spring line. That guy's general manager of the mills and has got more money than I have time."

Phyllis stared at her, then stumbled blindly out into the hall. She closed the door and swayed against it for a long moment. She was a clever girl. Love and millions had held her close and she hadn't had sense enough to stay there. Swell chance now of convincing Larry of what she'd really known ever since he had claimed her mouth for that first burning kiss

... that, with what he had, a bench in the park and bread line ticket would have been enough. She looked up with tear-drenched eyes as a door opened down the hall. Then the world started going around the right way again.

For, in the doorway of his private office, Larry stood, his eyes lit with incredulous delight and desire. Desire that was as strong as it had been when he had first looked at her.

"Come here." It was a plea and a command. She walked timidly to him and he pulled her into his arms and closed his lips over the bee stung fullness of her trembling mouth, as eagerly as though he had not been locked to this same sweetness less than one hour ago! "Money wasn't enough without love, was it, Adorable? Oh, I heard you ask the girl for 'Larry Rich-

mond, salesman'. And when you started out I realized you had just played around with this money-marriage idea because no one had ever really claimed your love before."

She surrendered her lips to him and clung with a frightened happiness to his strength. Larry lifted her as he had once before and, kicking the hall door shut, carried her to the cushioned davenport in his office. Once again

his exploring hands sought the warmth of her burning flesh as she nuzzled his cheek with tiny white teeth. He pulled her close against him to whisper things that were delightfully promising and delightfully naughty into her ear, his searching hands busy on strange missions that brought little sighs of joy from Phyllis' parted lips.

The blonde stenographer opened the door

"Hmph! Seems to me my secretary has some charms other than being able to attend to my social affairs."



from the main office a tiny crack then softly closed it and went back to her desk for an "In Conference" sign to hang on the knob. From what she'd seen she guessed the girl had known Larry. At least he'd been acting like they were old acquaintances. But maybe it hadn't been what she thought, the stenographer rebuked herself. After all, handling lingerie was Larry's business!

Frame-Up

(Continued from page 30)

And Kenton, delightfully aware of the fact that her lithe slender body was still quite *au naturel*, only took time to say, "Well, maybe," before proving a statement he had made a brief moment ago. Something about love!

"And you knew why I was here all the time?" Avis asked curiously.

"I knew why you were in Atlantic City," Kane smiled, "but do you know why you're here . . . with me, I mean?"

"If I said no—"

"Come closer," Kane urged, "I'll like telling you over and over again!"

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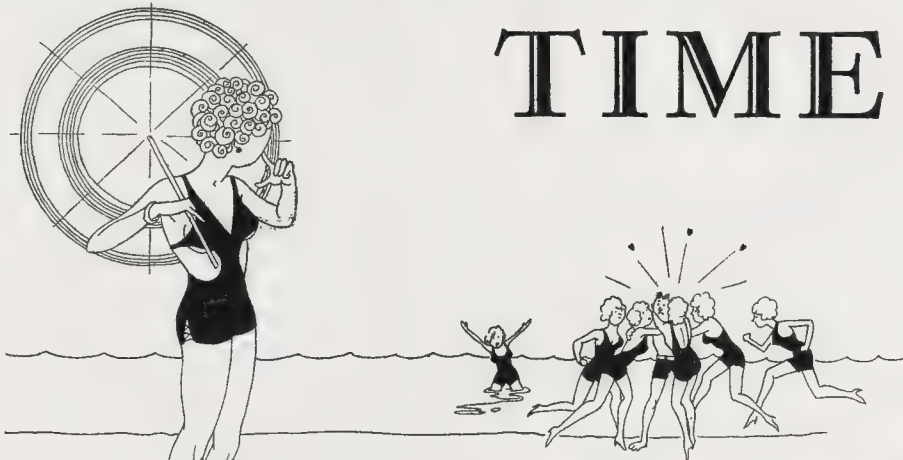
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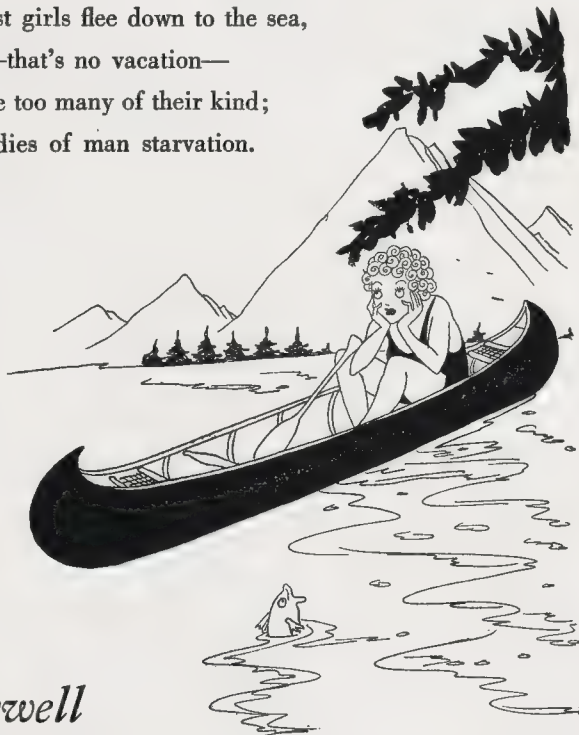
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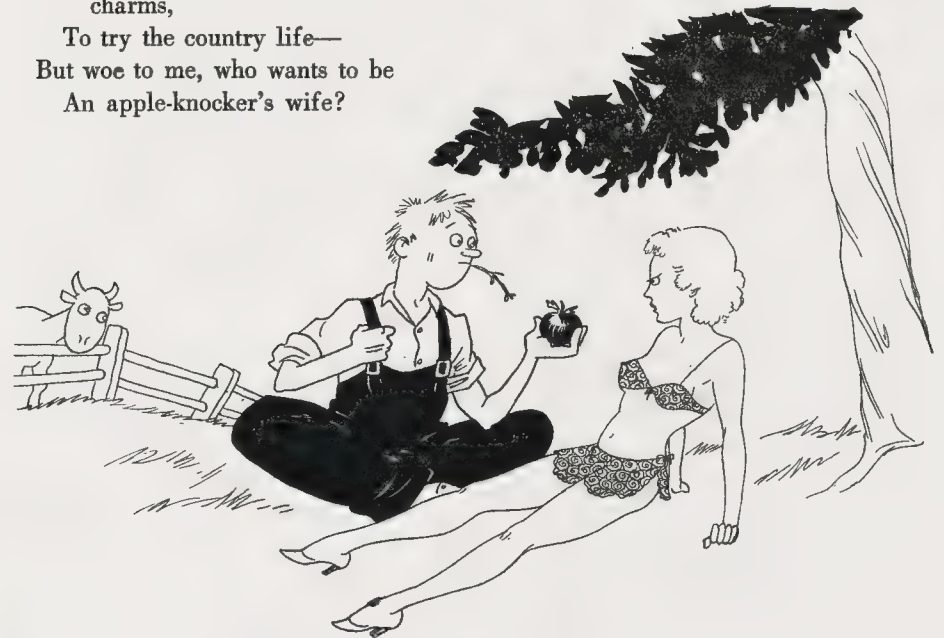
Now most girls flee down to the sea,
Alas—that's no vacation—
There are too many of their kind;
Love dies of man starvation.

Up to the mountain lakes and
dells,
Are hordes of girlies bound;
But here again they find that
man,
Just won't quite go
around.

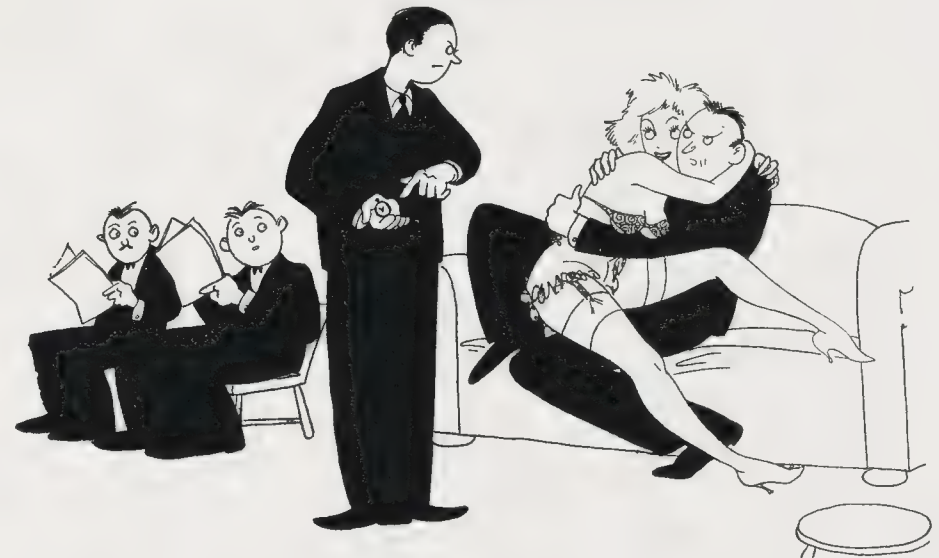


By
Virginia Maxwell

And to the farms some take their
charms,
To try the country life—
But woe to me, who wants to be
An apple-knocker's wife?



But I stay in the torrid city,
Now you see my position,
When others stray so far away
I have no competition.



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Forgiven Again

(Continued from page 36)

slowly to the center of the floor. He wondered what she was going to do. He was not in doubt long. Before he quite realized what she was doing, her intricate gown lay in a crumpled heap on the floor, and she stood before him clad in silver mask, black silk stockings, black satin slippers with red heels . . . and black silk panties. Nothing else. Russell gasped, and his eyes gleamed as she came towards him. Hungrily, he took her in his arms, and hungrily his hands devoured the whiteness of her soft, yielding flesh.

He kissed her, and her lips clung to his passionately. Her slender arms went about his neck, and her fingers locked. Maria held him in a tight embrace. Russell gently broke the hold, and equally gently pressed her against the back of the couch. Maria lay there, almost listlessly, her hands at her sides. He ran his hands over her glorious breasts, then he dropped his head to the deep valley of her throat. Maria could feel his warm hand as it slid onto her silk covered thigh. She sighed a little, and her fingers strayed into his hair.

"Darling," she whispered, and she seemed to linger over the word.

"You're beautiful," said Russell softly. One hand moved, and the room was plunged into stygian blackness.

MARIA, BY THE LIGHT of a shaded lamp, slid her dress once more over her head. She straightened it at the waist, and removed her mask. She looked at Russell on the couch. He was sleeping heavily, and the atmosphere was beginning to echo to the vanguard of the army corps of snores which were on the way. Maria hurried about the room. Then she turned out the light and disappeared.

IT WAS A HURRIED MEETING because Russell was in a hurry to get to his office, and in spite of the fact that he had raked Irene out of bed in the—to her—dead of night, she was quite satisfied with it. She was smiling happily when, about ten minutes after the departure of Russell, Aunt Hettie entered the room.

"Well, and what was that all about?" demanded Aunt Hettie curiously. "I never thought you'd see that young man again."

Irene held up her left hand. "See?"

"Your engagement ring! You mean . . ."

"I mean that Russell and I have patched up our differences, that we're to be married, and that you're talking to the happiest girl in the world."

"He's forgiven you?" Irene nodded complacently. "Well, I never! I would never've believed in this world that he would."

"He wouldn't've, except that he happens to be genuinely in love with me, and now that he's tarred with the same brush—only a darker shade—he's willing to let by-gones be by-gones."

"I don't understand!" complained Aunt Hettie.

"Well, you see," explained Irene, "Russell had for himself one hectic night of love with a Spanish singer, and that taught him a lot of things."

"But how d'you know?"

"I was the Spanish singer. With the help of Belle Ackerman, I framed Russell. I was too much in love with him to let him go so easily. I duped him into making love to a Spanish singer who was I. How d'you like my wedding present to myself?" From a silver box on a table at her elbow, Irene drew forth a long string of glittering diamonds.

"So you got that, too?" said Aunt Hettie, in a hushed voice.

"Just in case Russell didn't feel like . . . forgiving again!"

Just For Company

(Continued from page 40)

HE TOOK A COUPLE of steps toward the door. Lucy felt her throat go strangely dry. She walked to the door with him. He said:

"I'll meet you at that funny little dining place on Forty-second at one o'clock tomorrow. And I promise you that as long as we run around together in New York it will be just for company."

"I'll be there," she managed; "... and, yes, it will be just for company. But oh, do, before you go, put your strong arms around me just once more . . . you don't know how lonely I've been . . . it'll be so wonderful to know that you're there across the court . . . I could even call to you if I wanted to."

He put his arms around her again. But this time she had tempted his masculine endurance too far . . . especially since there were still visions in his mind of what he had seen from across the court before he came over.

The robe de nuit was very slippery and loose.

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It fell down off her shoulders; and they were the most beautifully rounded and exquisite of shoulders. No man could have resisted the temptation further to taste the delightfully musky flesh of them . . . and he did taste the flesh liberally, and at each taste it seemed to Lucy that flames burst out wherever his lips touched and spread out all over her body.

Seized with a delightful whimsy he picked her up bodily and placed her upon a chair near the bureau by the door. He hugged her close. His breath upon her was a devastating conflagration. She let her hands toy with his hair, realizing that all the time she had been seeing him brush it so delightfully smooth she had been longing to rumple it.

When she was breathing in deep gasps he subsided, lifted her tenderly down from the chair and placed her upon the floor.

"You delightful little angel," he breathed huskily. "It's all I can do to keep from eating you up on the spot. But I don't want you to think I'm just like all the others you've met in New York. I want you to be able to look to me as a safe friend and pal."

"Yes," she agreed, controlling her voice with an effort. "But before you go let me smooth your hair again; I'm afraid I've made it look perfectly awful."

He sat down while she took her comb and brush and tried once more to bring order to his lovely soft blond hair. It combed so delightfully and so smoothly that it was a fascination just to work with it. She put every strand in place, lovingly; but, peculiarly enough, fussing with his hair seemed to have sort of strange effect upon him. She saw his eyes go sort of glassy, and his good intentions vanish. She began to be a trifle afraid. But he rose, obediently enough, to go. But at the door he turned. And Lucy knew it was all off . . . but that she couldn't blame him. It was all her fault, and not a bit his.

Presently, after he had picked her up and put her down she felt his caressing worshipping lips, which nearly drove her mad. She sighed and remembered her good resolutions. Thinking of them now they seemed kind of silly . . . like the resolution of a bird not to sing.

IT WAS LATE. Night sounds settled down over New York. It was hell to be lonesome. And it was Heaven to be—not lonesome! She sighed and in the sweetest surrender found his lips.

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Guardian Angel

(Continued from page 23)

and mine tapped. I knew you had arranged that meeting with Georgia and Jerry Mattison last night!"

Trapped, Mona assumed an arrogant air. "Well, now that it has happened, what does the guardian angel intend doing about it? Lap up the spilled milk?"

Roy shook his head. "No, I'm going to marry the girl!"

"M-Marry the g-girl?"

"Of course. It's the decent thing to do, isn't it?"

"B-But—"

Roy grinned. "Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you. When I found out about the secret meeting I got Jerry out of the way and took his place. It was an opportunity I had been waiting for but didn't have nerve enough to carry through. And lo and behold, but I discovered that Georgia was in love with me all the time!" He stepped to the door. "Thanks a lot for making it all possible. And next time remember that guardian angels fly high and far, but when they come down to earth they know what they want!"

Mona stared at the closed door for long moments. Then she dropped into a chair. "Well, I'll be damned!" she gasped.

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